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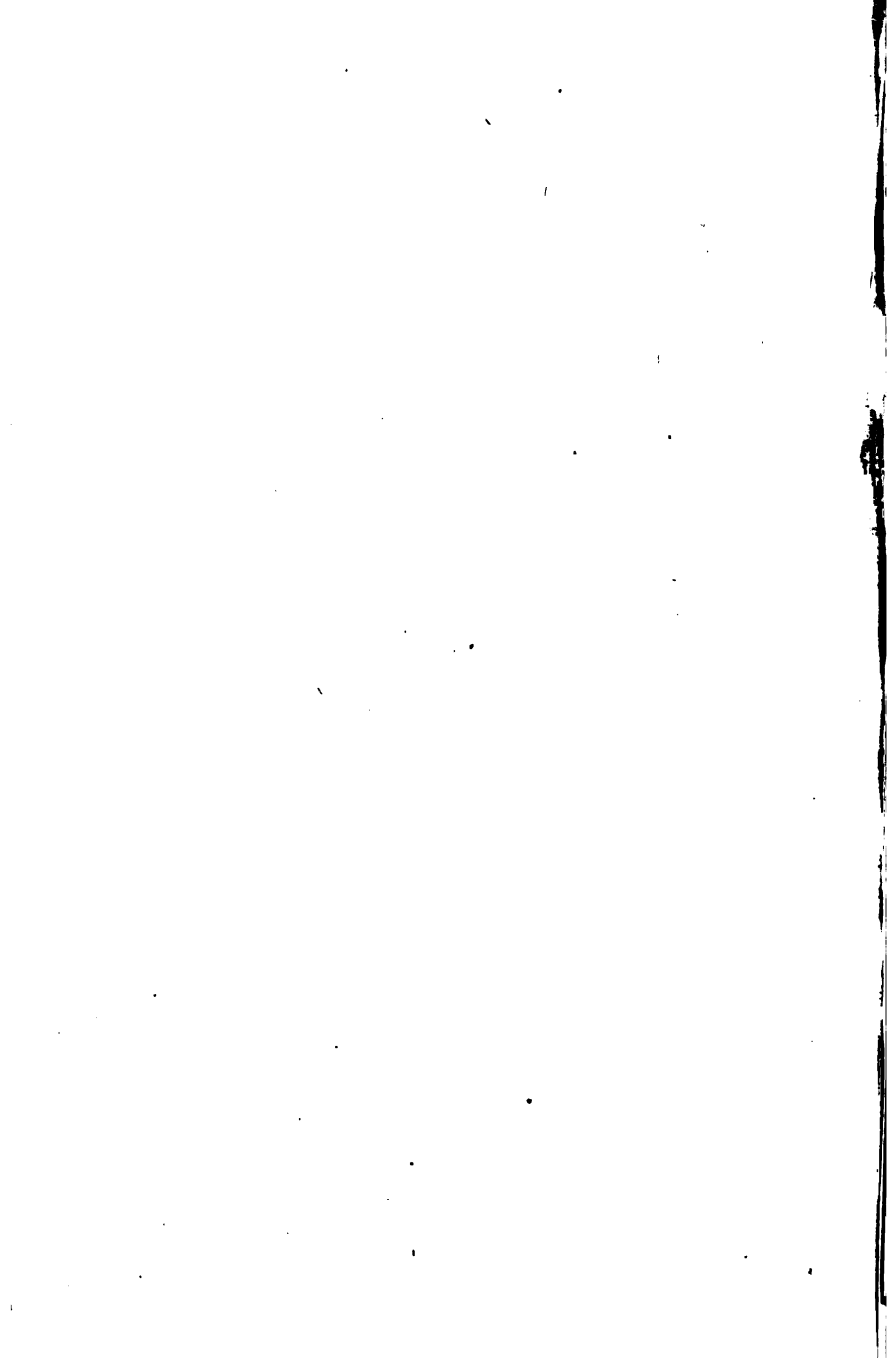
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521  
**THERESA HELBURN**

# **ALLISON MAKES HAY**



**A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS**

**WALTER H. BAKER & Co., BOSTON**

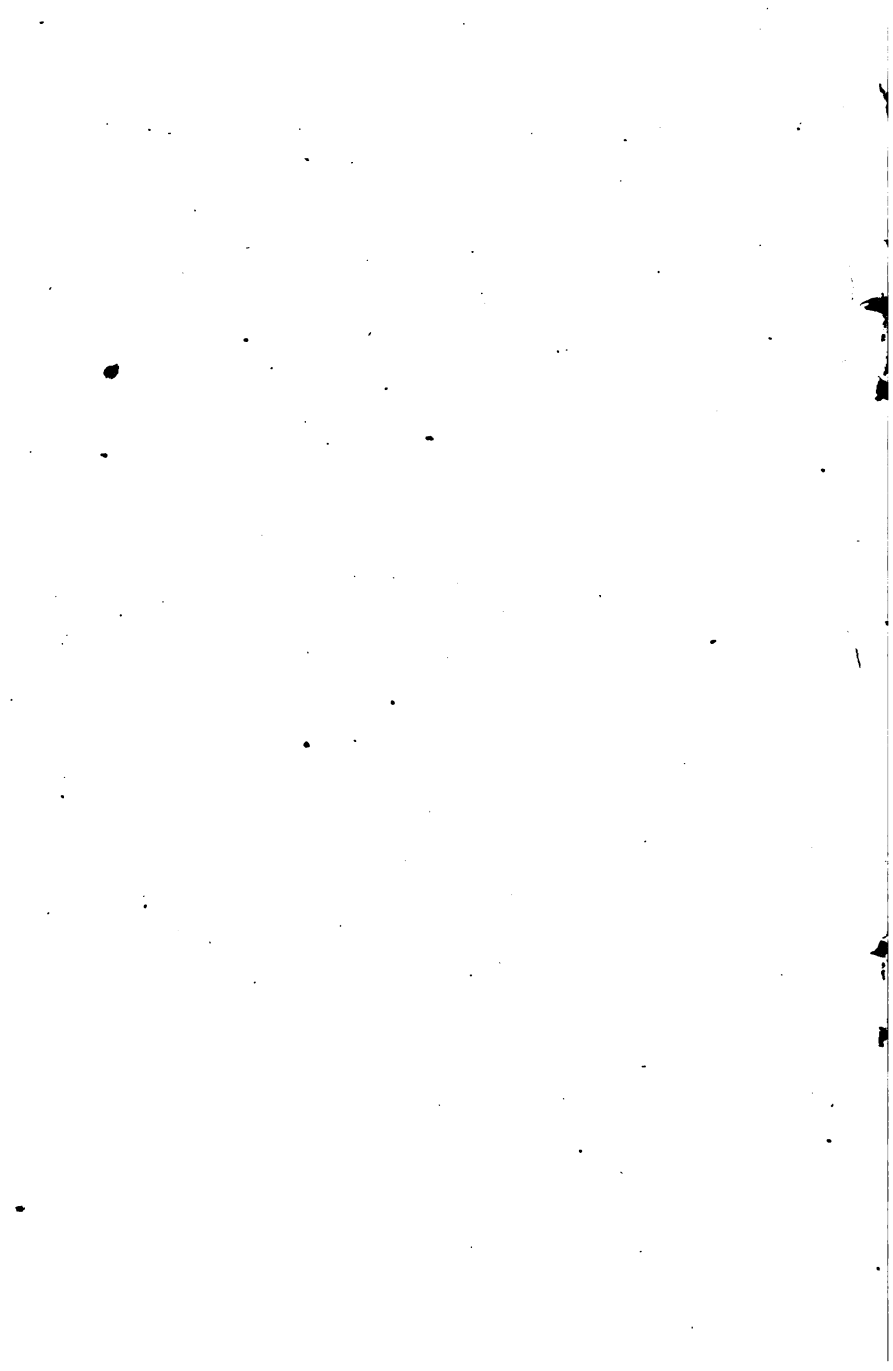
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## Allison Makes Hay





# Allison Makes Hay

A Comedy in Three Acts

By  
THERESA HELBURN

*Originally produced at The Belmont Theatre, New York,  
under the title of "Crops and Croppers"*

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BOSTON  
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1919

# Allison Makes Hay

## PERSONS OF THE PLAY

(In the order of their appearance)

MARGOT MARBROOK, 19, *her sister.*

JANEY WIMPOLE, 19, *her sister's friend.*

ANNIE, *her maid.*

PETER WESTON, 53, *almost her guardian.*

ALLISON MARBROOK, 23, *herself.*

ROY PARCHER, 24, *her soldier.*

STETSON, *her first recruit.*

JEAN, 27, *her hired man.*

MRS. BRADLEY, 35, *her last resort.*

DR. TRUESDALE, 34, *her unsuspected ally.*

STEPHEN MARBROOK, 29, *her brother.*

MRS. SPENCER, 51, } *her neighbors.*

MRS. PRAY, 32, }

PETE COBB, *her victim.*

## SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Her house in New York.

ACT II.—Her farm.

ACT III.—Her tenant house.

TIME.—1917. Our first year of the war.



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title of "Economy")

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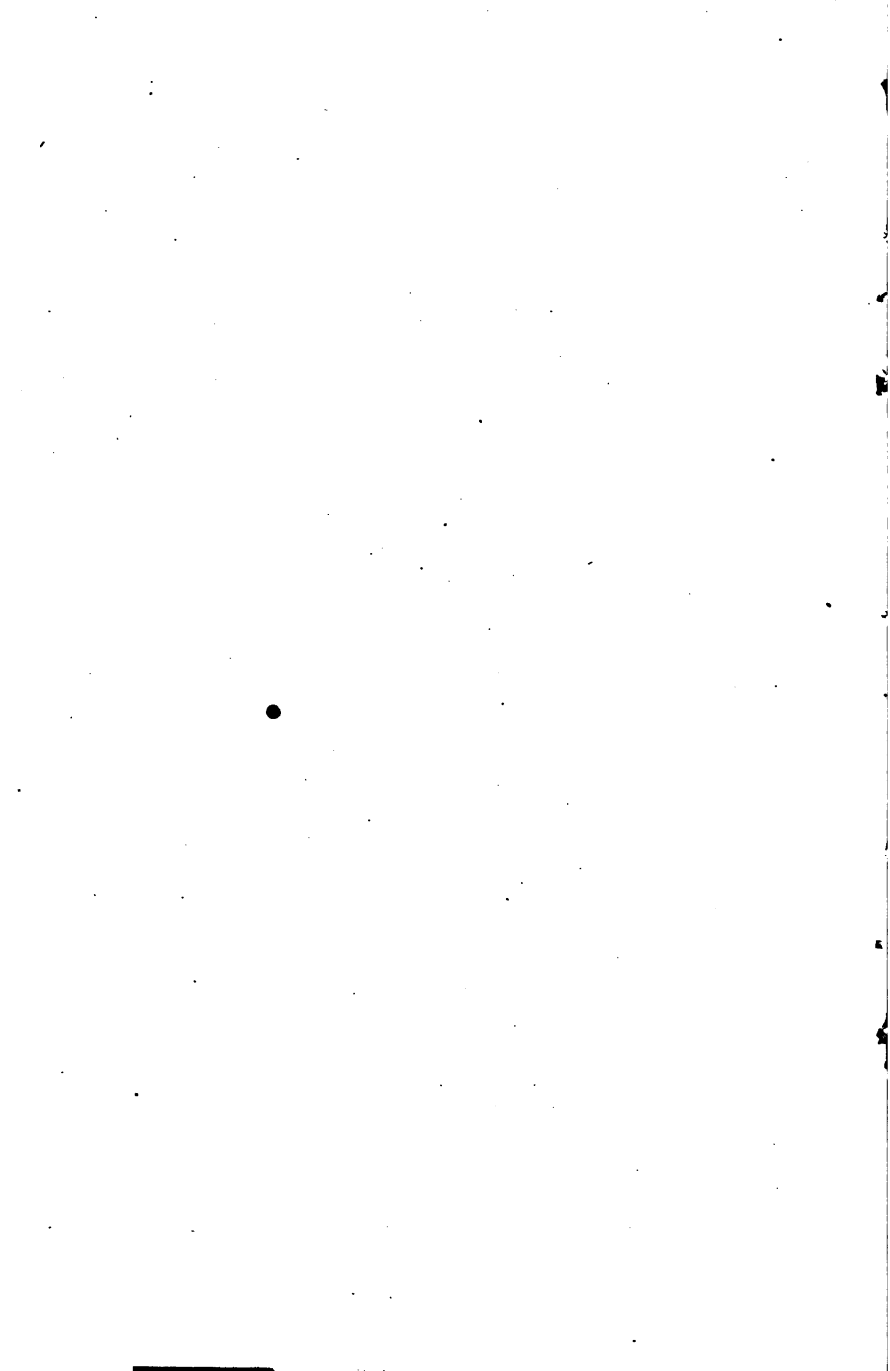
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To  
**JEAN LE ROY**  
*Poet and Soldier*  
*Killed in Action*  
*April 26th, 1918*



The first performance of

## Allison Makes Hay

Was given at The Belmont Theatre, New York,  
Thursday evening, September 12, 1918, under  
the title of "Crops and Croppers," with  
the following

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In the order of their appearance).

ANNIE, her maid . . . . .	Irene Daly
JANIE WIMPOLE, her sister's friend . . . . .	Eleanor Fox
MARGOT MARBROOK, her sister . . . . .	Louise Cook
PETER WESTON, almost her guardian . . . . .	Ben Johnson
ALLISON MARBROOK, herself . . . . .	Eileen Huban
ROY PARCHER, her soldier . . . . .	Thomas Mitchell
STETSON, her first recruit . . . . .	J. M. Troughton
JEAN, her hired man . . . . .	Georges Flateau
MRS. BRADLEY, her last resort . . . . .	Madeline Valentine
DR. TRUESDALE, her unsuspected ally . . . . .	Vernon Kelso
STEPHEN MARBROOK, her brother . . . . .	Henry Stanford
MRS. SPENCER } her neighbors. . . . .	{ Helen Westley
MRS. PRAY } . . . . .	{ Maud Sinclair
PETE COBB, her victim. . . . .	Charles Kennedy

The play was produced under the personal  
direction of B. Iden Payne

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# Allison Makes Hay

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## ACT I

*The scene is the living-room in the MARBROOKS' house in New York, an irregular shaped room with a fire, L., and near it a comfortable davenport and a tea-table. Across the room a big flat-topped desk, in front of which is a small settee. Bookcases, easy chairs, etc. The furniture is mahogany, the hangings and upholstery a quiet tapestry. A small cutting table, on which are piles of flannel and cheese-cloth, stands up stage. A door, centre back, leads to the hall, a door R. leads to another room. The time is an afternoon in February.*

*When the curtain rises, ANNIE, the maid, has just left the tea-tray on the small table near the fireplace and is going out. MARGOT MARBROOK, a pretty, dark, piquante girl of nineteen, in a simple house dress, sits by the table about to serve. JANEY WIMPOLE, also pretty and nineteen, throws her coat and furs on the settee and comes across to the tea-table. MARGOT is emphatic, a little spoiled, at times almost sharp; JANEY, plump, a little greedy, ecstatic. All entrances and exits are through door to hall unless otherwise specified.*

JANEY.

Tea—I'm starving!

MARGOT.

Then you'll be disappointed. Allison's getting so frightfully economical we never have anything to eat any more—no cake—just toast and crackers. She says we must set an example to the servants. What do you take?

JANEY.

[*Sitting.*] Cream and two lumps.

MARGOT.

We don't have cream, just milk, nor lump sugar. [*Holding up spoonful of granulated sugar.*] How many grains?

JANEY.

Oh, I hate granulated!

MARGOT.

Wait a minute, I can fix that. [*She goes to covered cloisonné vase on the bookcase, L., and dumps the contents into her hand.*] Secret stores! Have to get ahead of Allison somehow!

[*She returns to the table and deposits a handful of paper-wrapped sugar lumps thereon.*]

JANEY.

Lump sugar! Where did you get it? [*Picking up a lump, she reads.*] "Ritz-Carlton Hotel"—?

MARGOT.

Teaed there yesterday with Ted Colton.



JANEY.

[*Picking up another.*] "Café des Beaux Arts"—?

MARGOT.

Sh! That was last week—Jimmy Strother!

JANEY.

[*Même jeu.*] "Briarcliffe Lodge!"

MARGOT.

Sunday dinner. Timothy Wayne [*with a little mouse*]*—and* chaperon. Well, which will you have?

JANEY.

I think I'll have the *Beaux Arts*.

MARGOT.

[*Protesting.*] No, no, not the Beaux Arts! Poor Jimmy, he left for Spartanburg that night!

[*She sighs.*]

JANEY.

Well, may I have Teddy and the Ritz?

MARGOT.

Oh, no, leave me Teddy! You'd better take Timothy and the chaperon. The lumps are bigger anyway.

JANEY.

All right. I loathe Timothy. Perhaps the tea will drown him. Tell me, what's the matter with Allison? You're not really getting poor, are you?

MARGOT.

Not that I know of. But Allison says it's our *war* duty. Allison's just *hipped* about the war! Of course the war is terrible—with all the men going away and everything.

JANEY.

[*Helping herself to toast.*] Dreadful! Dreadful!

MARGOT.

There won't be a soul left soon! Allison wouldn't *hear* of my coming out this year! She says it's not the time to think of social things. And, of course, I don't want to either. What would be the use? There isn't anything to come out *to* except a lot of old ladies and bald heads!

JANEY.

That's just the way I feel. [*Seriously.*] I think I'll study nursing.

MARGOT.

I'm crazy to. You know Dorothea's in a hospital at Rouen. She writes the most *interesting* letters. She must be having a wonderful time. She doesn't seem to see anything but men!

JANEY.

Heavenly! I hate Red Cross classes. All females! But it takes three years to get a nurse's certificate. They're much stricter now than they were when your sister went over.

MARGOT.

Dorothea *was* over. She didn't come back. Besides, she's twenty-seven.

JANEY.

[*Sadly.*] The older girls are getting *all* the fun out of the war, aren't they? What's the matter with the toast?

MARGOT.

It must be the margerine. You get used to it in time. Have a cracker.

[*Enter ANNIE, the maid, a sprightly young person who might easily become forward, but doesn't.*

ANNIE.

Beg pardon, Miss Margot, there's some people looking at the house. May I show them in here?

MARGOT.

Oh, bother! No, not in here. We must have some place to ourselves. Show them all the other rooms and tell them—oh, tell them this room is being fumigated!

[*Exit ANNIE.*

JANEY.

People looking at the house? You're not going to sell it?

MARGOT.

This is Allison's idea. We *can't* sell it because it belongs to all four of us together, Dorothea, Stephen, Allison and me, but Allison wants to *rent* it.

JANEY.

And take a ducky little apartment for you two? I see. That's sensible. This house is much too big for you with Dorothea and Stephen away, and apartments are so cozy!

MARGOT.

Oh, if it were only an *apartment* that Allison wanted. But it's worse, much worse! She wants to rent this house and buy a—oh, it's too awful—she wants to—buy a farm!

JANEY.

A farm! Where?

MARGOT.

Oh, I don't know. Somewhere in the country.

JANEY.

Naturally she wouldn't buy a farm on Fifth Avenue. But what does she want to do with it?

MARGOT.

Farm it! Oh, it's this terrible war again! She's been to a lot of lectures about food conservation and food production and all that sort of thing, and she says Dorothea's nursing and Stephen's going to fight and it's our duty to do something, so she's going to buy a farm!

JANEY.

Good gracious! Isn't Allison wonderful?

MARGOT.

I don't approve at all. I don't want to have *anything* to do with it. I hate the whole idea.

JANEY.

But why? I think it's splendid! What fun to have a little farm all your own with pigs and fresh eggs —

MARGOT.

You don't get fresh eggs from pigs, Janey. You mean fresh bacon.

JANEY.

No, I don't. I mean pigs and hens and fresh eggs and sweet butter and—oh, the Garringforths have a little farm on their place, you know, with a model dairy, and it's the greatest fun!

MARGOT.

But I don't want to *live* on a farm!

JANEY.

Oh, you wouldn't have to *live* on it. You'd just go up for week-ends and give your orders and ~~eat~~ things.

MARGOT.

No, that isn't Allison's idea at all. We're to live on the farm and run it ourselves.

JANEY.

But what do *you* know about a farm?

MARGOT.

Nothing. But Allison says we'll learn. She says most farmers are very common, *stupid* people, and if *they* know all about it there's no reason why we can't learn very quickly with our expensive educations. She's been making all sorts of inquiries.

JANEY.

Well, I think it's delightful. I've always wanted to live in the country. What glorious house parties you can have!

MARGOT.

House parties! There won't be any *men*. They'll all be away at camp, and I won't even be able to have tea with them on their way through.

JANEY.

[*Suddenly, after a sympathetic pause.*] Why don't you buy a farm near Yaphank? Or Plattsburg, or some place like that?

MARGOT.

[*Struck.*] That's not a bad idea, Janey.

JANEY.

Then you wouldn't have to import any men for your parties [*with meaning*], only a girl or two. Besides they'd help you run the farm. They say the officers just have to *find* work for the men to do at those camps, so if you know just two or three nice officers —

MARGOT.

[*Cheering up.*] I'll suggest that to Allison. Thanks, Janey. Let's see, there's Dick Potter at Yaphank and Billy Rogers and — [*Enter ANNIE with card.*] What is it, Annie—more tourists?

ANNIE.

No, Miss Margot, a gentleman to see Miss Allison.

MARGOT.

[*Having read card.*] Miss Allison is not at home.

ANNIE.

Miss Allison said she'd be in by five. Shall I ask him to wait?

MARGOT.

No. Tell him Miss Allison is *not* at home.

[*Exit ANNIE.*]

JANEY.

Why not have him in? This is no season to turn down a perfectly good man.

MARGOT.

He's not a perfectly good man. He's a manure company!

JANEY.

A what?

MARGOT.

[*Handing her the card.*] You can see for yourself.

JANEY.

[*Reads.*] "Mr. James O'Donnell, representing the Boyd Fertilizer and Manure Co." Good gracious!

MARGOT.

Allison's had heaps of callers like that lately. Every time I go in or out I meet a man in the hall who turns out to be an agricultural implement, or a patent hen-house, or a chemical fertilizer like this one. I told you Allison had been making inquiries.

[*A man's voice is heard outside saying,*  
"Thank you, I'll go right in."

JANEY.

Good Heavens, here he is!

[*The door opens and a stout, middle-aged, distinguished, lazy gentleman enters.*]

MARGOT.

[*Brightly.*] No, it's Peter! Hello, Peter! When did *you* get back?

PETER.

Yesterday. How are you, my dear? Good afternoon, Janey. [*Sinking into a comfortable chair.*] Washington is an impossible hole!

JANEY.

I thought Washington would be wonderful this year! So many interesting men—people, I mean—are down there. Every one who isn't in the army is in Washington.

PETER.

You mean every one who ought to be in the army is in Washington. And you can't get a bed fit to sleep in or a meal fit to eat.

MARGOT.

Poor Peter!

JANEY.

What were *you* doing down there, Mr. Weston?

PETER.

Muddling the Government with my good advice. But tell me, Margot, what's up? The maid who let me in asked me if I wanted to rent the house. Do I look as homeless as all that?

MARGOT.

Annie's new. She didn't recognize you.



PETER.

A young man in the hall didn't recognize me either. He wanted to know if I was interested in manure! What kind of a game is this?

MARGOT.

Oh, Peter, it's the war! Allison wants to rent the house and buy a farm!

PETER.

A farm! Allison!

*[He breaks out laughing. A whistle is heard off stage.]*

MARGOT.

*[Who has been pouring tea for Peter.]* It's true. She'll tell you about it. I hear her now. Don't laugh, Peter, it's too awful! *[In the same desperate tone.]* Cream or lemon?

PETER.

Cream, please.

MARGOT.

Oh, I forgot. There isn't any. You'll have to take milk.

*[ALLISON MARBROOK enters, a radiant young person of twenty-three. She is sweet, innocent, impulsive, credulous and eager. She wears street clothes and furs.]*

ALLISON.

Hello! Why, Peter, how jolly! When did you get back? Hello, Janey! That tea for me, Margot?

MARGOT.

No, it's for Peter, and he likes *cream*! You're late. Some toast, Peter?

ALLISON.

[*Taking off her wraps.*] I know. I've bought a farm!

JANEY.

Hurrah!

PETER.

*Bought it?*

ALLISON.

Yes, this afternoon.

MARGOT.

Is it near a camp?

ALLISON.

What do you mean?

MARGOT.

Is it near Yaphank or Plattsburg?

ALLISON.

No, it's in Connecticut.

MARGOT.

Then I'm not going. If it had been near Yaphank I might have gone.

PETER.

I venture to prophesy, Margot, that if there's no encampment near your farm at present, there will be one shortly after you and Allison move in.

[MARGOT pours tea for ALLISON.]

ALLISON.

[*Bursting to tell them everything.*] Our farm is near a lake and there's a lovely view, and there's a little mountain right on the place —

JANEY.

How adorable!

PETER.

[*Sardonically.*] And is there any farm land?

ALLISON.

[*Taking her cup.*] Heaps—acres and acres!

PETER.

How many acres?

ALLISON.

I can't remember whether he said eighty to a hundred or a hundred and eighty. I was so excited when I saw it, and acres never mean anything to me. How big is an acre, Peter?

PETER.

An acre? Well, the exact dimensions of an acre escape me for the moment, but —

ALLISON.

There you are! No one *ever* knows how big an acre is. It's just a figure of speech. But this farm *looked* big enough.

MARGOT.

You saw it? When?

ALLISON.

Last Sunday.

MARGOT.

Why didn't you take me?

ALLISON.

I *did* ask you, Margot, but you wanted to go to Briarcliffe with Timothy Wayne.

MARGOT.

I remember. But I didn't know you were going to buy *that* farm!

ALLISON.

Neither did I!

PETER.

Haven't you been a little hasty about it, Allison?

ALLISON.

Well, you see, Peter, I couldn't wait, because the agent said there was another person—party, he called it—looking at it, and the other party was very, *very* anxious to have it.

PETER.

[*Sardonic.*] The agent said that, did he? How original of the agent!

ALLISON.

But I haven't been hasty about making up my *mind*, Peter. Ask Margot. For three weeks I've done nothing but look up farms. [*She goes to her desk.*] Here are two drawers full of letters and

prospectuses and all kinds of things about farms. We've been very thorough, haven't we, Margot?

*[She begins hunting through the drawers for something.]*

MARGOT.

"Speak for yourself, John." Peter, you're not eating your toast.

PETER.

Thank you, I'm not hungry this afternoon.

MARGOT.

It's the margerine. Have a cracker.

PETER.

Thanks.

*[He takes two.]*

ALLISON.

I'm trying to find a picture to show you. I have one somewhere.

JANEY.

*[Crossing to ALLISON.]* I think it's a splendid idea, Allison. I'm perfectly crazy to live in the country, and I think a farm would be ideal. Is yours white stucco with pink roses climbing all over it and mullioned windows? That's the kind the Garringforths have on their place and I adore it! I'm crazy to see yours!

ALLISON.

*[Handing her a photograph.]* Here it is.

JANEY.

*[Slowly, open-mouthed.]* This?

ALLISON.

Yes, show it to Peter. [*JANEY, looking at the picture with incredulous eyes, crosses and hands it to PETER at arm's length. PETER looks at the picture a moment in silence.*] Well, what do you think of it, Peter?

PETER.

I think it's a lucky escape for the "other party."

[*MARGOT has risen and moves behind PETER so she can see the picture.*]

MARGOT.

Why, it's awful! Impossible! You couldn't live in a place like that. What are you thinking of, Allison?

[*She starts to tear the picture.*]

ALLISON.

[*Stopping her.*] Stop, Margot, don't tear it! You have no imagination. It looks dilapidated now, I admit. All farmhouses do when they're *old*, and that's the only kind to get. It needs fixing but, as the agent said, it's much better to have the repairs done under your own supervision, so you can be sure they're what you want.

[*MARGOT crosses, sits with her back to the others, and pretends to be absorbed in a newspaper.*]

PETER.

[*Taking photo back.*] But, Allison, granting you have made the thorough survey of farm property that these two drawers indicate, will you be good enough to tell me what recommended this particular habitation to you above all others?

ALLISON.

That's easy, Peter. It was the cheapest.

PETER.

[*With a glance at the photograph.*] I'm not surprised.

ALLISON.

You see, Peter, our main purpose in all this—I don't know whether Margot has told you—is economy. Every one tells us that food and economy will win the war. So while Dorothea is nursing the wounded and Stephen is fighting, Margot and I are going to raise food and economize! [MARGOT *makes a face.*] That's why I bought this farm. It's ridiculously cheap and really the house is going to be comfortable enough when we make a few changes. [*She perches on the arm of his chair and points out on the photograph as she talks.*] All you have to do is to raise the roof, put in a few dormer windows, take down the outhouses, build a little ell on for kitchen and bathrooms, put a porch on that end, and maybe a terrace at the other, scrape off the wall paper—that is dreadful—panel the inside in white, and really you'll be surprised what a pretty house it will make. I've seen an architect about it and he agrees with me perfectly.

[JANEY, *s'tanding behind PETER on the other side, has nodded approval of all ALLISON's plans. Now she goes to the table, fills her own cup and eats and drinks while she follows the ensuing conversation.*

PETER.

I see. But, Allison, won't these "repairs," as you call them, be rather expensive?

ALLISON.

Yes, rather—but, then, as we're getting the farm so cheap we can afford to spend a little more on the alterations. That's reasonable, isn't it?

PETER.

Oh, I don't say you can't *afford* it, Allison. You could afford a nice little house in Bar Harbor if you wanted it, but if you prefer this, I don't see any reason why you shouldn't have it. Still, I must say that I'm disappointed you didn't consult me. You know I should have been appointed your guardian if Stephen and Dorothea hadn't happened to be of age when your parents died, and I can't help feeling——

ALLISON.

I know, Peter dear. And I always think of you that way. But you see I'm of age now, and this was something no one could decide for me. Stephen didn't ask any one's advice when he enlisted, or Dorothea when she began nursing the wounded. Besides, you were in Washington, and farms don't keep.

PETER.

I don't want to seem inquisitive, Allison, but are you and Margot planning to live on this—er—potential farm quite alone?

MARGOT.

[*Turning for a brief second.*] I'm not planning to live on it at *all*, if you want *my* opinion!

ALLISON.

[*Ignoring her.*] No, indeed, we'll have a maid or two, and hired men—and friends, like you and



Janey, only they'll be expected to work—I warn you  
—*work!*

PETER.

Maids and hired men—and friends! H'm. I know it's a delicate subject with you, Allison, but—no—er?

ALLISON.

Chaperon? I knew you'd come to that, Peter. Well, we've no chaperon here in town!

PETER.

That's not my fault. I did my best —

ALLISON.

And so did we! How many have we had, Margot, including Aunt Evelyn and Cousin Hester? I can't remember. But we never sent *one* of them away. *Honestly*, we didn't, Peter. They all left of their own accord. [*She pauses a moment, pensively.*] I guess they weren't very happy with us, though we always gave them the best room and all that. And if they weren't happy with us here in town, I'm afraid they'd be much less happy in the country, for they'd be thrown in on us so much more, with no theatres or movies or anything to take their minds off us. No, I'm not going to worry about that. I'm too old now to need a chaperon anyway.

PETER.

Oh, *are* you?

ALLISON.

[*Gently.*] Well, I don't mean to boast, but you know, Peter, I *have* had a couple of chances to get

married, and if I didn't take them that's nobody's business but my own. The point is that if I *had* taken them—or, rather, *one* of them—I would now be a chaperon myself, and the fact that I didn't take them doesn't prove me any the less intelligent—rather more so. Of course, you don't know the men, so you'll have to take my word about that. But, anyway, you see I consider myself beyond the chaperonable age, and as for Margot —

MARGOT.

[*Rises and crosses to c. defiantly.*] Oh, you needn't bother about Margot! Margot isn't going out to your horrible, dingy little farm and that's flat! Whatever war work she does, she's going to do right here in *New York City*!

JANEY.

[*Slyly picking up a sugar lump.*] Cheering up lonely soldiers on leave—eh, Margot?

ALLISON.

Now don't say that, Margot dear. I know you don't mean it. And I've got a perfectly splendid plan for you. While I'm busy seeing about the alterations—repairs, I mean—on the farm, you're to go to Cornell and take a course in Agriculture!

MARGOT.

[*As soon as surprise permits her to speak at all.*] Cornell?!!! Me?!!!

ALLISON.

Well, I've decided one of us ought to have some solid scientific knowledge, and you know, Margot

dear, you've got much better brains than I. You always got better marks at school! You really have the makings of a splendid student in you, Margot, in spite of your modesty. And you're practical too, and that's the sort of thing one needs on a farm. You never let any one see half the good things that are in you, Margot. I have a feeling the farm will bring them out.

MARGOT.

[*Mollified, but still defiant.*] It isn't going to get the chance! Anyway, I'm not going to study agriculture with a lot of farm hands!

JANEY.

[*Ecstatic as usual.*] Oh, I think it's a splendid plan. I wish I knew enough to go to a great university like Cornell! Why, there must be three thousand men there, or more!

MARGOT.

Yes, but what sort of men! I want to go to France and help Dorothea.

ALLISON.

You know that's impossible and if you really want to help, Margot, you can be much more helpful here. So what's the difference?

PETER.

[*Dryly.*] The difference, my dear Allison, between doing war work here and going to France is the difference between a Platonic friendship and a love affair.

ALLISON.

You don't realize, Margot, that the war has given a new dignity to agriculture? The farmers are just as important now as the soldiers. Some of our very best men have felt it their duty to go in for agriculture.

JANEY.

That's so. Now I think of it, I know a couple of boys who are going to farm. Allan Barton's one. Don't you know him, Margot? [MARGOT *shakes her head.*] Heaps of yellow hair—brushed pompadour? I do love men with light hair, don't you? By Jiminy, I think he's at Cornell now!

ALLISON.

The farmers are the real home guard, Margot. If you went and studied with them, you'd be fighting shoulder to shoulder with the great army of the reserve. It's really the farmers who are going to win the war. And they know it. Of course it's not as showy as going to France, but that's what makes it all the more heroic. I'm sure, dear, when you understand the real situation, you won't refuse. It's a sacrifice, I know, but you're not afraid to make it for your country, are you, Margot?

MARGOT.

[*Grudgingly.*] Well, if I went, when would I have to go?

ALLISON.

The spring course begins in two weeks. I've the catalogues here. I'll go up with you and get you settled. Oh, Margot, you're just splendid!

JANEY.

Two weeks! Have you any clothes?

MARGOT.

Clothes?

JANEY.

Farm clothes, I mean. Oh, they're doing *wonderful* things with farm clothes now! Even Suzanne had a display of them in her window! Didn't you see it? You mustn't wear overalls, Margot, like those women in the Sunday supplements. You must wear linen breeches and puttees. They're much smarter. Or smocks. Oh, what delicious smocks you can have!

MARGOT.

[*Excited at last.*] I *do* like smocks! When do I have to enrol, Allison?

ALLISON.

That's all right. I sent in your name yesterday.

MARGOT.

[*Annoyed.*] You did?

JANEY.

[*Absorbed with the really important aspect of the affair.*] Have you last month's *Vogue*? There are some farm ideas in that. [*Seeing magazine on table up stage.*] There it is, isn't it? [*She goes to table.*] Come here, Margot.

MARGOT.

[*Joining her.*] Allan Barton . . .? Didn't he go to Hotchkiss?

[*They talk together as they look through the magazine. PETER, who has been sitting back smoking a cigarette and watching the little scene with amusement, rises slowly.*]

PETER.

Well, I must be getting on. I should like to congratulate you, Allison, on your diplomacy.

ALLISON.

What do you mean, Peter? Are you being horrid?

PETER.

I wish they had you in Washington.

MARGOT.

This isn't the right number. I have it in my room. Come on, Janey.

JANEY.

I'll take my things with me. [*She collects them.*] Good-bye, Allison, don't forget to invite me to the farm. Good-bye, Mr. Weston.

[*As they are going out through door, R., the maid, ANNIE, enters through door at back.*]

ANNIE.

Mr. Parcher is here, Miss Allison.

ALLISON.

Oh, how nice! Ask him to come up.

[*Exit ANNIE.*]

JANEY.

[*Stopping abruptly.*] Who's Mr. Parcher—the Manure Co.?

MARGOT.

[*Surprised.*] No. Don't you know Roy Parcher? Oh, that's true, he's been at camp ever since you came back to New York. But come on, he's not worth waiting for—he's Allison's.

[*The girls go out, L.*]

ALLISON.

Don't go, Peter dear.

PETER.

Have to. Why don't you and Margot have dinner with me at the Gotham?

ALLISON.

Oh, we can't! We're going to Amy Wentworth's or I'd make you stay. It's her night for bandages.

PETER.

To-morrow then. I go back Thursday.

ALLISON.

We'd love to.

PETER.

There are some points about this farm proposition, Allison, that —

ALLISON.

[*Laying a coaxing hand on his shoulder.*] Please don't disapprove of me, Peter dear. I'm very much in earnest. I feel as if I couldn't face Dorothea and Stephen when they come back from France if Margot and I hadn't done something. You mustn't disapprove — [ROY PARCHER enters, a nice-looking

*young man in the uniform of a first lieutenant.]*  
Oh, hello, Roy! This is jolly! I didn't expect you in town till Saturday.

ROY.

Orders changed. How are you, Mr. Weston?

PETER.

Well, thanks. [*With a glance at Roy's tanned face.*] I needn't ask about yourself. Till to-morrow, Allison.

ALLISON.

[*Going up stage to door with him.*] Good-bye, Peter. You can scold me all you like to-morrow. [*Exit PETER. ALLISON comes down stage to ROY thoughtfully.*] Only I guess I won't go.

ROY.

Go where?

ALLISON.

To dinner with Peter. He'll try to discourage me and there's no use letting people discourage you when your mind's made up, is there, Roy?

ROY.

I don't know what you're talking about, Allison.

ALLISON.

Oh, I've just bought a farm and Peter doesn't approve, and he wants to spoil a perfectly good dinner to-morrow telling me so.

ROY.

You've got to dine with me to-morrow.



ALLISON.

[*Brightly, relieved.*] Do I? Well, that settles it, doesn't it?

ROY.

I go back to-morrow night.

ALLISON.

Why, you've just come!

ROY.

I know. They cut down our leaves to thirty-six hours.

\*-ALLISON.

[*Apprehensively.*] Really! What does that mean, Roy?

ROY.

I don't know. Looks as if we might be going over any time now.

ALLISON.

[*Impressed.*] Oh, Roy! . . . Are you glad?

ROY.

Of course. But it brings you up short a bit, too.

ALLISON.

I know. Have you had tea?

ROY.

Don't want any, thanks.

ALLISON.

Then do you mind if I work? [*She moves up R. to take the little work table. Roy goes to her as-*

sistance. *They carry it down R. in front of the desk.*] Here, thanks.

*[She sits. Roy stands, looking down at her.]*

Roy.

It's nice to see you again, Allison.

ALLISON.

Thanks, old top, same to you. I haven't seen you since you were promoted. Congratulations.

Roy.

*[Swaggering a little.]* Thanks. Were you surprised? Pretty quick work, wasn't it? Did I write you what the Colonel said? He said "Parcher," he said, "if all the men got their promotion as quick as you ——"

ALLISON.

*[Interrupting.]* - Yes, you wrote me. It was splendid! And you certainly look nice in uniform, Roy. It's awfully becoming.

Roy.

*[Glancing at himself in the little colonial mirror behind ALLISON.]* Think so? Not bad, but we ought to have belts. Don't you think we'd look better with belts, Allison?

ALLISON.

Let's see.

*[She hands him a strip of flannel. He puts it around his waist.]*

Roy.

What are you making with this stuff?

ALLISON.

Abdominal bands.

ROY.

Oh!

*[He removes the belt hastily. Enter JANEY, R., hurriedly.]*

JANEY.

I beg your pardon. I think I must have left my bag here. I was just going when I missed it.

*[She crosses behind desk to C. and begins looking on settee on which her things had lain.]*

ROY.

Let me look!

ALLISON.

Janey, this is Roy Parcher. Margot's friend, Miss Wimpole, Roy.

*[They exchange smiles and "How-do-you-do's."]*

JANEY.

I don't see it.

ROY.

There it is, under the desk. I'll get it for you.  
*[He pulls out the little settee and drops to his knees beside the desk. JANEY, looking down, perceives his hair, which is thick and golden. She gazes at it, fascinated. ROY, still on his knees.]* Isn't this it? *[Perceiving her gaze, he puts his hand hastily to his head.]* I say, what's the matter?

JANEY.

[*Slowly.*] You ought to wear it pompadour! Oh, I beg your pardon! Yes, that's it. Thanks awfully! I'll run along now. Excuse me for butting in. Bye-bye, Allison.

[*She hurries out much embarrassed, but casting a final glance at Roy's golden poll.*]

Roy.

[*Who has risen to his feet, staring after her.*] Well! Of all the — Pretty, isn't she?

ALLISON.

Awfully, and fun too. Come sit down, Roy.

Roy.

[*Drawing the little settee near ALLISON. The letters with which the desk is littered prompt his next remark.*] I've enjoyed your letters heaps, Allison. I know my answers weren't very regular.

ALLISON.

Oh, I didn't expect you to answer regularly. I know you're frightfully busy. I made up my mind I'd write every Tuesday, rain or shine, a war pledge, you know. I have you down on my calendar for Tuesday. [*She lifts the Phillips Brooks calendar which is hanging on the end of the desk near her and reads.*] "Tuesday, write Roy."

Roy.

It was fine of you, Al, I appreciate it. [*Looking at the calendar in turn.*] But see here, who's Bobby A.? It says, "Wednesday, write Bobby A."

ALLISON.

[*Going on with her work.*] Oh, that's Bobby Akins. He's a little navy boy. I don't even know him. I was just asked to "take him on" because he was lonesome.

ROY.

Well, if you don't know him, that's different, but I say [*looking closer at the calendar*]; do you know Arthur Garry, Thursday, and Michael F., Monday, and Dick Peters, Saturday?

ALLISON.

[*Laughing.*] Some of them. You wouldn't like me to write to you every day, would you, Roy? You'd be bored stiff.

ROY.

[*Nervously fingering the calendar.*] I don't know as I should. You see, Allison, I find most of the fellows have a girl at home—one particular girl, you know—whose picture they've got and all that—and they get a heap out of the idea. It's a sort of an anchor and a comfort when you're darn cold and uncomfortable to know there's somebody—besides your mother, of course,—who thinks a lot more of you than she does of [*flinging down the calendar*]—of Bobby A. and Michael F., and Dick Peters. You've been my best girl friend for so long, Allison, I've sort of taken things for granted, but when I think of going over there and—er—getting into the thick of things, I'd like to feel there was something more between us than just—[*he picks up the calendar again and lets it fall*] just this!

ALLISON.

Good gracious, Roy, is this a proposal?

Roy.

Well, I don't know as you could call it that, Allison. I can't very well ask you to marry me. I don't think a fellow has a right to ask a girl to marry him when he doesn't know whether he's coming back in pieces or not in the next six months, but what I mean to say is, I—I'd like it awfully, Allison, if you'd be engaged to me! [ALLISON *does not answer. He comes close to her.*] What do you say, Allison? Will you?

ALLISON.

I'm thinking, Roy. [*She rises and moves away.*] This is an entirely new idea to me. I hadn't thought about getting engaged at the present moment. You see, as I've told you, I've just bought a farm and my mind is pretty well taken up with that.

Roy.

[*Following her.*] I don't see what your buying a farm has to do with getting engaged to me.

ALLISON.

No . . . you're quite right. I ought to have room in my mind for more than one thing at a time. Let me think, Roy.

Roy.

I know how you feel. I didn't think about it either until we got our leaves cut down, and they told us to go home and make our wills and put our affairs in order.

ALLISON.

[*Impressed.*] Did they do *that*? Oh, Roy, how dreadful!

Roy.

Yes, that brings a fellow up short, you know, and makes him think, and I found I was thinking more about you—after mother, of course—than any one else. This war business is a pretty serious thing, Allison.

ALLISON.

[*Touched in her Achilles' heel.*] Oh, Roy, I wouldn't have you go over there with a wish like that ungratified for the world! If anything happened to you I'd never forgive myself! Of course I'll be engaged to you, Roy!

Roy.

You will?

ALLISON.

I'd be a pretty poor sort of girl if I couldn't do that much for you when you're going over to fight for me and my country! I'm proud and happy to be engaged to you, Roy! . . . I was going to write to you regularly anyway, and I don't see that it will take any more time to write now we're engaged, will it?

Roy.

But you won't go on writing to all those other chaps, will you?

ALLISON.

Well, I've sort of signed up for that as a patriotic duty. But I'll make it perfectly clear to them that

I'm engaged to you, Roy, and of course I'll write longer letters to you and more. It will be lots more fun writing to you now! You can say so much more to a person when you're engaged to them, can't you?

ROY.

[*Coming dangerously close.*] Can you? I never was engaged before. [He takes her hands.]

ALLISON.

[*Holding him at arm's length and hastily making conversation.*] Neither was I, except once for three days, and that was owing to a misunderstanding. Oh, well, I'll have heaps to tell you about anyway, Roy, what with the farm and all.

ROY.

Bother the farm, Allison, aren't you going to—er—to —

[ANNIE, the maid, enters providentially. They separate.]

ALLISON.

What is it, Annie? Oh, yes, the tray.

ANNIE.

[*Collecting tea things.*] There was a gentleman just called to see you on business, Miss Allison. I took the liberty of saying you were engaged.

ALLISON.

[*Startled.*] Engaged! How did —?

ANNIE.

[*Tray in hand.*] Mr. Weston and Miss Wimpole were still here.



ALLISON.

Oh, yes, quite right, Annie. And what did he want to see me about?

ANNIE.

[*With obvious disapproval, stopping on way to door.*] Hogs, Miss.

ALLISON.

Hogs! How interesting! Will he call again?

ANNIE.

He said he would 'phone, Miss. [Exit.

ROY.

[*Who has taken a small box out of his pocket and is sitting on the davenport.*] I say, Allison, I stopped at Tiffany's on the way up and—er—got this.

ALLISON.

[*Coming to him, excitedly.*] Oh, Roy, how reckless of you!

ROY.

[*Conscientiously.*] Well, I had it charged in case—er—in case you didn't like it.

ALLISON.

[*Laughing.*] I see! But I *do* like it, Roy! It's beautiful! Beautiful!

ROY.

The man said it was their latest war model. I'm glad you like it. May I put it on? [ALLISON gives him her hand. He puts on the ring, continues hold-

*ing her hand and draws her towards him.]* There's something else, Allison —

ALLISON.

*[Hastily.]* I know. I ought to give you something—something I've made, oughtn't I? But I haven't anything. I've been so busy with the Red Cross — Oh, there are the bands, the abdominal bands! Will you take those, Roy? They say they're awfully useful and I made them myself.

*[She has broken away from him and goes to the work table. He follows her.]*

ROY.

I don't want any bands, Allison. You know what I want.

*[The little table is between them.]*

ALLISON.

*[At bay.]* I know, Roy. *[Gaily.]* Come on. Let's get it over.

*[They kiss shyly across the little table. Then they separate, somewhat embarrassed. MARGOT'S voice is heard outside calling, "Oh, Allison! is Roy still there? There's a motor waiting for him." They separate to different sides of the room. ROY fingers an ornament on the chimneypiece. MARGOT bursts in.]*

MARGOT.

Hello, Roy. Did you hear?

ROY.

Yes. Hello, Margot.

ALLISON.

Margot, Roy and I are engaged.

MARGOT.

What are you *doing*?

ALLISON.

[*A little annoyed.*] Engaged! Engaged to be married.

MARGOT.

[*Not to be jollied.*] Ha ha! You look it!

ALLISON.

Don't be silly. It's true.

MARGOT.

Seriously?

ALLISON.

Here's my ring.

[*This is proof positive.* MARGOT rushes to inspect it.]

MARGOT.

Oh, what a duck! Well, aren't you the sly pair! Congratulations, sweetheart! [*She kisses ALLISON.*] Congratulations, Roy! I suppose I've got to kiss you now you're a member of the family! [*She runs across and gives him a hearty hug and kiss in marked contrast to the one he and ALLISON have exchanged. Struck by a new thought.*] Hurrah! I suppose you'll give up the farm idea now!

ALLISON.

Certainly not! Roy goes off to-morrow, perhaps for good. He's another one we have to live up to.

MARGOT.

Oh, bother! Well, I found some dinky patterns! I suppose you won't go to Amy Wentworth's now.

ALLISON.

Oh, I must. It's her bandage night. We'll take Roy with us.

Roy.

I can't. I have to go out to Irvington to Grandma's. It's her eightieth birthday. That's what the car is for.

MARGOT.

[*Scornfully.*] Grandma's! On your engagement night!

ALLISON.

Of course he must go. His grandmother won't have many more birthdays.

MARGOT.

How many more engagement nights do you think Roy will have? Well, it's not *my* business. I'll clear out and let you say good-bye in peace. No one could ever call *me* a gooseberry!

[*She runs out leaving ROY and ALLISON somewhat dismayed at the program she has laid out for them.*]

Roy.

I'm awfully sorry, Al ——— Good Lord, it's after six! I was to call for mother at quarter to!

[*The telephone rings.*]

ALLISON.

[*Moving to answer it.*] I understand perfectly, Roy. [*In 'phone.*] Yes, this is Miss Marbrook—Allison Marbrook. [*To Roy.*] Hurry right off, Roy. [*In 'phone.*] Hogs? Oh, yes, were you the gentleman who just called? I'm so sorry. Just a minute. [*To Roy.*] What is it, Roy? Lunch tomorrow? Yes, of course. Call me up. [*In 'phone.*] No, thank you. I don't think I shall have any hogs. They're so big and ugly. Pigs? Oh, well, pigs are different. Just a minute. [*To Roy, who has come very close.*] Good-bye, Roy. You don't want to take the abdominal bands? Oh, they're not wrapped. I'll send them to you. [*As he starts to kiss her.*] Oh, I can't now. Very well. Quietly, Roy. [*She covers mouthpiece with her hand as he kisses her cheek.*] Good-bye. [*Roy goes. In 'phone.*] Yes, I think I'll have some pigs, little ones. [*Calling.*] Remember me to your grandmother! [*In 'phone.*] No, I wasn't speaking to you. No, not to you. . . . But I can't order any styes now. . . . Yes, I'm sure yours are very nice. . . . But I'd rather wait until I get the pigs. The styes ought to fit the pigs more or less, oughtn't they? Oh, you'll send me some pictures? That's very kind of you. I don't like to bother you. . . . Well, of course, if you want to. . . .

THE CURTAIN HAS FALLEN AS SHE TALKS

## ACT II

*The scene is a charming white-panelled room at the farm. Two small bay windows with a door between take up most of the right wall. There are window-seats inside and brightly flowering window boxes outside. The door between is broad and solid, with long hand-made hinges, painted black. It is the main entrance to the house. In the opposite wall, French windows give on a little brick terrace, shaded by a pink awning. The French windows are curtained in muslin. The bay windows have rose patterned shades which are now partially drawn, as it is a warm summer morning, the third of July, to be precise. From the left back corner rises a small colonial staircase that takes up part of the back wall. Beneath this, to the right of the centre, is the door leading to the kitchen, flanked on either side by the two halves of a small mahogany console table. On the L. down stage in front of the French windows is an old mahogany desk with bookcase above, and up stage a door to a cupboard in which are shelves for china and glass and drawers for linen and silver. Round wicker tables and easy chairs, a soft green with rose patterned cushions, and four straight-backed rush-bottomed mahogany chairs complete the furniture of the room. Bowls of flowers are on the tables.*

*The curtain rises on an empty stage. After a moment MARGOT and PETER come along the path outside the nearer bay window and enter, R. MARGOT wears a white skirt, white tennis shoes and stockings, a pale blue smock and a big shade hat. PETER is in motor togs, linen duster and cap. He is hot and dusty. The chauffeur, STETSON, follows after a moment, carrying PETER's bag.*

MARGOT.

[*Tossing her hat on table.*] Here we are, Peter. How do you like it?

PETER.

[*Sinking, as usual, into the most comfortable chair, and mopping his brow.*] Charming—charming.

MARGOT.

Stetson, will you put that at the head of the stairs? [STETSON obeys; to PETER.] Why didn't you bring Janey?

PETER.

Her sister is bringing her. She's house hunting in these parts, I believe. May I have something to drink, Margot?

MARGOT.

Oh, Peter, we've no alcoholic beverages! Will ginger ale or lemonade do?

PETER.

Perfectly. A horse's neck.

MARGOT.

I'll get you one [*she starts for kitchen door, rear*],  
and Stetson must be thirsty too.

[*She goes into kitchen, leaving door open.*]

PETER.

No, Stetson likes Moxie. He can go back to that  
drug-store we passed a few miles back, can't you,  
Stetson? [STETSON *has come down-stairs again.*  
PETER *hands him a bill and adds, low.*] And get  
a bottle of Haig and Haig while you're about it,  
Stetson.

STETSON.

Very good, sir.

[*He goes, R.*]

[MARGOT *reënters carrying a bottle of ginger  
ale and a lemon.*]

MARGOT.

Here you are. Where's Stetson?

[*Goes to cupboard.*]

PETER.

Gone. Why must you bother? Couldn't a maid  
have got it?

MARGOT.

[*Bringing glass, opener, etc., to table L. C.*] We  
have no maids.

PETER.

No maids!

MARGOT.

The last left yesterday when she heard we were  
going to have company over the Fourth.



PETER.

Great Scott—only two people——

MARGOT.

[*Cutting the lemon rind.*] It wasn't the company frightened her. But Allison told her it was to be a *working* house party, that the guests were to help, you know. Allison thought it would please her. She left on the spot.

PETER.

So you've no one? Why didn't you call us off?

MARGOT.

I suggested it, but Allison said it would be better to have you and Janey come and help us than to try to do it all alone.

PETER.

[*Not very much pleased at the prospect.*] Oh, did she? I have to go back to-morrow. Did I tell you?

MARGOT.

Don't let that bother you. We'll get some maids from town after the holiday. We've always had some one here. Allison says we are like the woman who kept three, one here, one coming and one going. Here, you open it, Peter. It always squirts on me.

PETER.

[*Opening and pouring the ginger ale.*] None for you?

MARGOT.

No, thanks.

[PETER takes a long drink, after which he is able to pay some attention to his surroundings.]

PETER.

[*Looking around.*] Well, you certainly have done wonders. It doesn't look much like that photograph.

MARGOT.

I'm glad you've been away and didn't see it till it was all done. Allison did most of it while I was at Ithaca.

PETER.

That's so. How did you like college, Margot?

MARGOT.

Oh, the men were *impossible!* Still I did have some fun. I got the Faculty in line very quickly. There was a young etymologist for one, and a pomologist, and a —

PETER.

Strikes me you got the gist of things very soon, Margot. Did you study nothing but human nature up there?

MARGOT.

Oh, no, I learned heaps. See all those books? [*Pointing to bookcase.*] That's my agricultural library.

PETER.

[*Impressed.*] Do you know what's in all of those?

MARGOT.

Certainly not. That's the best part of agriculture. You don't have to *learn* anything. It's all down in books and indexed, so whenever you want to know anything, all you have to do is to look it up! Don't you want to see the place, Peter?

PETER.

Not just yet. We crawled these last miles. Your roads here are just rivers of mud.

MARGOT.

I know. We've had a solid week of rain. But that's good for the crops.

PETER.

[*Smiling at her knowledge.*] So I've heard tell. What are you raising?

MARGOT.

Oh, we put a lot of things in in Máy, corn and rye and the vegetable garden and so on. We had a fine farmer then. But he left. He didn't like the tenant house.

PETER.

Who have you now?

MARGOT.

No one. That's where Allison is.

PETER.

There? Where?

MARGOT.

Hunting for a hired man. We can do without maids, you know, but we must have a man, because

the things are growing and you can't stop them. It's terrible getting labor, Peter. All those heroes Allison talked about so glibly have never showed up. The only way I can see to run a farm is to marry a widower with three stalwart sons! [*She takes up bottle.*] More, Peter? [*He shakes his head. He is laughing.*] Then I'll finish it.  
[*Empties bottle into glass.*]

PETER.

But that's my glass!

MARGOT.

I know. It saves washing. We did our own work once before.

PETER.

Have you had no one since the first farmer left?

MARGOT.

Oh, yes; several hired men. But they're not much good, you have to tell them everything. One of them put the asparagus plants in upside down. [*Collects bottle and glass, etc.*] Well, I suppose it was partly my fault. I told him to put them in that way. But he ought to have known better.  
[*Takes bottle, etc., into kitchen.*]

PETER.

Certainly. *He* hadn't been to an agricultural college!

MARGOT.

[*Coming in again.*] Well, it's easy for you to laugh, Peter, but how can you tell which end of a plant is going to grow up and which end is going

to grow down, when they both look exactly alike! And they're so expensive,—hired men, I mean! They don't seem to realize we are doing this for the war. *They're* just out for their *own gain*! You know, Peter, there was an old farmer in my class on farm management, and when the professor began talking about profits and things, he stood right up in class and said, "B'gosh, don't talk to me about farming. *It's standing on the brink of hell throwing in checks!*" And I rather think he's right.

PETER.

Aren't you discouraged rather early in the game, Margot?

MARGOT.

Well, I never was for it, you know. But Allison isn't discouraged. She says we've done heaps in a short time, what with the house and the barns,—oh, you must come and see the barns, Peter! They're dreams, all sealed and as clean as wax.

PETER.

They'll keep. How much live stock have you?

MARGOT.

Well, we haven't any yet except the two farm horses, and we're boarding them down at Spencer's till we get a man. You see, animals take such a lot of looking after. I feed and wash Grumpy, our dog, and *I know!* Still it is a shame to have those lovely barns empty. We're thinking of getting a calf, a little one. Allison and I might be able to manage that between us, don't you think?

PETER.

A calf is so lucrative!

MARGOT.

Besides we must get a farmer or a hired man soon.

PETER.

[*Looking off L.*] Do your hired men live in that little tenant house too?

MARGOT.

No, in the barn. Allison had the cunningest rooms put in, with a bath and all.

PETER.

A suite of rooms with bath! Allison didn't stint herself, did she?

MARGOT.

Well, she said if any one on the place needed a bath, it was the hired man. And of course she was right.

PETER.

I don't-doubt it.

MARGOT.

We've made lovely blue smocks for the men too. Only so far none of them would wear them. Allison has an eye for color. That's why she got a white collie, thought it would look so nice on the green. But, my goodness! since the rain he looks like Mary's lamb in Pittsburgh. He's out with Allison now, looking for a hired man.

PETER.

I see you're driven to hunting hired men with dogs.

MARGOT.

Listen! [*Sound of motor.*] There's Allison now. [*She runs to window.*] And she's got some one with her. Who is it?

PETER.

I can't see at this distance.

MARGOT.

It's a man! Hurrah! But my goodness, Peter, he's an awful looking object, isn't he?

PETER.

Well, I'm here, and Stetson once sparred against Freddy Welsch. What's the brown thing coming up the path?

MARGOT.

Great Heavens! It's Grumpy! And I washed him this morning!

PETER.

[*Opening the door.*] Hello, Allison.

ALLISON'S VOICE.

[*Off stage.*] Shut the door, Peter. Don't let Grumpy in. He's too muddy. [PETER *shuts the door.* ALLISON'S voice, *off stage.*] No, no, oo muth go to the barn, thweetest—tant tum in now—oo's too muddy!

[ALLISON *opens the door and slips in quickly, shutting it behind her. She carries an*

*armful of bundles which she puts on table up R. with MARGOT'S hat. She wears corduroy skirt and yellow smock.*

ALLISON.

Hello, Peter dear! Where's Janey?

PETER.

Coming.

ALLISON.

Well, congratulate me. I've found a hired man!

MARGOT.

[*Who has been looking moodily out of the window.*] Well, I shan't wash him, that's one sure thing!

ALLISON.

All right, I will.

PETER.

Great Heavens, young ladies! I admit the specimen that accompanied Allison looks much in need of ablution, but does the task always devolve on one of you damsels?

ALLISON.

Oh, she means Grumpy. I had a puncture and Grumpy jumped out. I couldn't stop him. But it was the luckiest breakdown, because that's how I found the hired man! He was sitting on the roadside looking awfully tired and muddy, but when he saw me trying to jack up the car, he came and asked if he couldn't help. He was awfully polite and nice.



Not but what I would be glad of help from the wild man of Borneo when it comes to changing a tire. But he isn't from Borneo. He's French. Well, when he got the tire on —

PETER.

All alone?

ALLISON.

I handed him the tools, but he knows about a machine, said he was a mechanic once—well, when he got through he seemed so nice in spite of his looks, that I had a wonderful inspiration. So I said to him, just as they do in books, "My good man, are you out of a job?" And he said that was *just* what he *was*. "Do you know anything about farming?" said I. He said he was brought up on a farm. Wasn't that lucky! So I said, "Would you like to come and work for me?" and he said he would be delighted! So he got in the car, I turned right round, we stopped at the village and did the errands and here we are! He knows about farming and automobiles both; isn't it splendid?

MARGOT.

Sounds too good to be true.

PETER.

Do you usually acquire your labor in this casual way?

ALLISON.

We don't usually acquire it at all, Peter. That's the trouble.

PETER.

Well, where is this specimen? You'd better have him in and let us look him over. He sounds rather fishy to me.

ALLISON.

He's coming. He just took the car to the barn. Oh, I forgot to tell you the most exciting part—he's served in the French army. I told him how we were doing this to help win the war and he was awfully interested. He's got the nicest eyes!

PETER.

Well, if he's a French soldier, what's he doing over here?

ALLISON.

Oh, he was wounded or something.

MARGOT.

Does he speak English?

ALLISON.

Very well, considering. But I talked French to him, too.

MARGOT.

And he understood? He must be a marvel!

ALLISON.

Sh! [*There is a knock at the door.*] Entrez!  
[*Enter JEAN. His age and usual appearance are rather difficult to gauge beneath his four days' growth of beard and the mud*

*that cokes him. He wears khaki trousers, much the worse for wear, tucked into muddy boots, a flannel shirt and soft cap.*

JEAN.

[*Cap in hand.*] Mademoiselle?

ALLISON.

Come in. This is Jean, Peter—Jean Duval, isn't it? Monsieur is a very old friend, and this is my sister of whom I told you.

JEAN.

[*Bowing to each in turn.*] Monsieur—Mademoiselle.

PETER.

[*Eyeing him suspiciously.*] Miss Marbrook tells me she found you sitting by the roadside. What were you doing there?

JEAN.

[*Whose refuge in any crisis is to pretend not to understand.*] Pardon, Monsieur?

PETER.

I say, what were you doing there?

JEAN.

I waz—er—what you call it?—lookin' for ze job—

PETER.

That's an odd place to be looking for a job—on the roadside.

JEAN.

[*Innocently.*] Is it? But it came to me zere!  
You see?

ALLISON.

You don't understand, Peter. He was *on his way*  
*to town* to look for a job. [JEAN *nods.*]

PETER.

Where do you come from?

JEAN.

[*Making time.*] Pardon, Monsieur?

PETER.

[*Louder.*] I say, where do you come from?

JEAN.

Oh! from la Bretagne, Monsieur.

PETER.

Where's that?

ALLISON.

Brittany, Peter. You've been in Brittany. Don't  
you remember the Celtic remains? Jean knows  
all about them.

PETER.

I didn't mean that.. Where have you *just* come  
from? Were you in a place?

JEAN.

Mais oui, Monsieur. Ze Dr. Truesdale's place.

PETER.

Where is that?

MARGOT.

Oh, I know where that is, about eight miles from here, over the hill. Don't you know, he's the man who did such splendid work in Servia and got typhus or something. Isn't that the Dr. Truesdale you mean, Jean?

JEAN.

Yeas, Mademoiselle, zat is he.

PETER.

What did you do there?

JEAN.

[*Vaguely.*] Oh, everyt'ing, Monsieur.

MARGOT.

Handy man around the place? That's just the sort we want.

JEAN.

[*Bowing.*] Zat is me, Mademoiselle.

PETER.

I suppose Dr. Truesdale will give you a reference.

JEAN.

A what, Monsieur?

PETER.

[*Louder.*] A reference.

JEAN.

Comprends pas, Monsieur.

PETER.

[*Very loud.*] A reference! A report as to your character and ability.

JEAN.

Pardon, Monsieur, I have still my hearing.

PETER.

[*Exhausted.*] It doesn't seem of much value to you.

ALLISON.

That's enough, Peter. Jean's tired and hungry. I'm going to take him to the barn and show him his quarters. Later I can call up Dr. Truesdale on the telephone, can't I, Jean, and talk to him about you?

JEAN.

Mais si, Mademoiselle. Dr. Truesdale will be delighted to talk to you, about me, or anyt'ing.

ALLISON.

You see, Peter?

JEAN.

I fear ze doctor is away just now. But if Mademoiselle will give me a few days, I will procure ze documents in writing.

PETER.

[*Sceptical.*] Huh!

ALLISON.

That will be fine. Margot, get me one of the smocks, will you? Jean, ou avez vous mis votre—votre bundle? Vous comprenez?

[MARGOT gets smock from lowest drawer of cupboard.]

JEAN.

Si, Mademoiselle, dans l'automobile.

ALLISON.

[Taking smock.] All right. Come along. I want you to wear this to work in.

JEAN.

[Looking at the garment in dismay.] Zat?

ALLISON.

Yes, I made it myself, for the workmen on the place.

JEAN.

Yourself? [He takes it reverently.] Mademoiselle, I shall wear it avec ze grand plaisir!

[He holds the door open for her and follows her out.]

PETER.

Well! do you call that giving a satisfactory account of himself?

MARGOT.

Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't be so particular, Péter. You act as if hired men were just lying round to be picked.

PETER.

Picked up, you mean. Well, I shan't let you keep this fellow until I've had a good talk with Truesdale, and perhaps not then.

MARGOT.

Peter, if you'd hunted for hired men as hard as we have, you'd welcome the Kaiser himself with open arms. [*Sound of motor.*] What's that? [*She runs to the window.*] Janey!

[*She runs out. You hear her calling off stage, "Hello, Janey! Go way, Grumpy, go way! Oh, Mrs. Bradley, how nice! I'll take it, Masters." Presently she reënters, carrying JANEY'S suitcase and showing in JANEY and her sister, MRS. BRADLEY, a smart young matron. Both wear silk motor coats.*

MARGOT.

Come in. You know Mr. Weston? Peter, this is Janey's sister, Mrs. Bradley.

PETER.

[*Shaking hands.*] I haven't seen her since she wore short frocks.

MRS. BRADLEY.

I'm still wearing them, it seems—shorter and shorter! [*They laugh.*] Oh, but this is enchanting, Margot! It's a miracle what you've done with it!

MARGOT.

It is pretty, isn't it? We live here, and eat on the terrace.

[*She opens terrace door, revealing pale green iron table, chairs, etc.*

MRS. BRADLEY.

Charming! And the view!



MARGOT.

[*Opening kitchen door.*] This is the kitchen. Do you want to see it?

[MARGOT and MRS. BRADLEY go into kitchen.]

PETER.

Janey, are you ready for work?

JANEY.

Of course. I wore my working clothes. [*She takes off her wrap and appears in immaculate white corduroy skirt and pale green smock.*] How do you like them?

PETER.

Most becoming! You know there are no servants.

JANEY.

Good Heavens! Who's going to cook?

PETER.

[*Eyeing her dress.*] That's what I'm wondering!  
[MRS. BRADLEY and MARGOT reënter.]

MRS. BRADLEY.

Janey, go in and look at Allison's canning kitchen. It's simply perfect! May I go up-stairs?

[*She and MARGOT go up. MARGOT is heard off stage, saying, "This is Allison's room. No, that's a guest room—the servants are in the ell," etc. Enter ALLISON, R.*]

ALLISON.

Hello, Janey! I'm awfully glad to see you. How did you come out?

JANEY. .

Sister brought me. She's up-stairs with Margot.

ALLISON.

Good! Will she stay?

JANEY.

No, she's house hunting. [*With inuendo.*] I've just come back from Spartanburg, Allison.

ALLISON. .

That's so. Did you have a good time?

JANEY.

Gorgeous! By the way, I saw quite a bit of your friend, Roy Parcher. He sent you heaps of messages.

ALLISON.

Did he? Poor boy, he's so busy he gets hardly any time to write.

JANEY.

That's funny. Seemed to me he was playing round an awful lot.

[*MRS. BRADLEY and MARGOT descend the staircase.*]

MRS. BRADLEY.

Well, I think it's perfectly enchanting! How do you do, Allison? I'm just in rhapsodies over your house! I wish I could find anything half so nice for myself and the children. They show me the most awful barns of places. Well, I must be off. Good-bye, Mr. Weston; good-bye, Janey. [*Kisses her.*]

Good-bye, Allison. [*At the door.*] You don't want to rent me *this* house, do you? I'd take it in a minute.

ALLISON.

[*Laughing.*] I'm sorry. Must you *really* go?

MRS. BRADLEY.

Must. Bye-bye. I may look in on my way home this afternoon if I'm anywhere near. Don't come out.

MARGOT.

I will.

[*She and MRS. BRADLEY go out. As usual MARGOT is heard saying, "Get away, Grumpy!"*]

ALLISON.

Well now, friends, we must get to work. I warned you.

PETER.

Janey's all ready!

JANEY.

What am I to do?

ALLISON.

I think you'd better help Margot get lunch.

JANEY.

[*Disgusted.*] Is *that* what you call farm work?

ALLISON.

[*Sadly emphatic.*] It *certainly* is, Janey.

PETER.

And a very excellent work it is! I only wish Janey had had a little more experience of it!

JANEY.

And what's Mr. Weston to do?

ALLISON.

I think Peter had better cultivate the garden.

PETER.

That sounds very intellectual. What does it imply?

ALLISON.

Oh, just weeding and loosening up the ground, you know. It needs it terribly.

PETER.

Weeding? Loosening up the ground? Isn't it a little warm for that sort of work to-day?

ALLISON.

We can't wait for cold weather in July, Peter. After the rain there are heaps of weeds.

PETER.

*You mean I'm to get down on my knees at my age and pull out weeds!* [JANEY gloats.

ALLISON.

No, I'll get you the Planet Junior. All you have to do is to push it down the rows.

PETER.

A Planet Junior? I've heard of hitching one's wagon to a star, but this is beyond me.

[Reënter MARGOT.

JANEY.

Margot, Mr. Weston's going to weed the garden and we've got to get lunch!

MARGOT.

I know, but there's a woman coming to wash up. Take these, Janey.

[*She takes packages from table, up R., and gives some of them to JANEY.*

ALLISON.

Open the back door, Margot, and keep this door shut. It gets the place so hot.

JANEY.

[*Wailing.*] My clothes will just wilt to rags!

[*She goes into kitchen.*

MARGOT.

[*At door.*] Watch out for lice, in the garden, won't you, Peter?

PETER.

Good God! What do you mean?

MARGOT.

Potato lice, of course. I want to know if we have any.

[*She goes.*

PETER.

[*Recovering.*] Oh! . . . What's your Gallic jail-bird doing, Allison?

ALLISON.

Jean? Oh, how can you! He's getting "red up."

PETER.

What's the matter with his attacking the garden?

ALLISON.

Oh, there's heaps for him to do. I thought you *wanted* to work, Peter. Of course, if you don't *want* to, I'll do the garden.

PETER.

No, indeed. I wouldn't have you weed the garden for worlds. I shall.

ALLISON.

Good! [*Crossing to cupboard.*] Here's a smock, Peter. Take your coat off and put it on. I'll go get the cultivator. I'm afraid it's all in pieces. I'll have to put it together for you.

[*She goes out. PETER removes coat, attempts to put on smock, hears sound of motor, looks out of window, hastily resumes coat, sits in chair and pretends to read a magazine. There is a knock at the door.*]

PETER.

Come in.

[*Enter STETSON with suspicious-looking bundle.*]

STETSON.

[*After hasty look around.*] Here you are, sir.

PETER.

Thanks, Stetson, just put it on the desk. [STET-

son obeys.] Oh—er—put it *behind* the desk, Stetson.

STETSON.

Very good, sir. Shall I put the car up, sir?

PETER.

Yes.

STETSON.

Any further orders, sir?

PETER.

No. [STETSON *starts to go. A sudden idea overwhelms* PETER *as he gazes at* STETSON'S *broad back. He speaks again.*] Oh—er—Stetson.

STETSON.

[*Stopping.*] Yes, sir?

PETER.

Just a minute, Stetson. What a strong-looking fellow you are, Stetson! I'm thinking you'll find it rather dull here. We won't do much motoring—and—er—no maids, you know!

STETSON.

I'll be busy, sir. The mud on that car alone is enough to —

PETER.

It's hardly worth while to wash it, Stetson. It will only get worse going back. I wouldn't waste time on it.

STETSON.

[*Rather amazed.*] Very well, sir. If you say so, sir. I thought I might try some fishing, sir. The streams look pretty good about here.

PETER.

Fishing's no sport for a strong man like you, Stetson. And it's not useful. You know, Stetson, these young ladies have started this farm to help win the war, raise food and all that. Delightful idea, isn't it? I thought perhaps you might like to help them.

STETSON.

Help them?

PETER.

There's the garden, for instance. Did you ever weed a garden, Stetson? I've heard it's rather good fun. Miss Allison was just asking for some one to weed the garden. I thought you might like to volunteer.

STETSON.

Weed the garden? Me? Are you serious?

PETER.

Quite. It's only a suggestion. I'm talking to you as man to man, Stetson.

STETSON.

Then, as man to man, sir, I consider it a mighty insultin' suggestion. I'd like you to remember, sir, I'm an expert mechanic, not an agricultural laborer.

PETER.

[*Annoyed.*] It might be well for you to extend your talents a bit, Stetson. In war time, you know —

STETSON.

War or no war, I'll be hung if I make a bloomin' farmer of myself! I'd rather *enlist*.



PETER.

I wonder you didn't callist before, Stetson.

STETSON.

Well, sir, it seemed a little beneath me, but this is a darn sight worse! I'd be glad if you'd take a week's notice and [*impertinently*] I'd like to remind you —

PETER.

Don't bother to remind me of anything, Stetson. It's no wonder the Allies are having a hard time with lazy snobs like you cumbering the country!

STETSON.

Lazy snob! *Me*, sir? And what do you call *yourself*, sir?

PETER.

Oh, go to the Devil! I didn't engage you to be impudent!

STETSON.

Or to weed any damn garden! I suppose I may consider myself at liberty?

PETER.

You may! [*Taking out wallet.*] Here's your money. You can go at once. Thank God, I'm not dependent on a chauffeur. I can run my own car.

STETSON.

Then perhaps you'll be so good as to run me down to the station.

PETER.

[*Controlling himself.*] It'll do your manners good to walk to the station, Stetson.

STETSON.

[*Pocketing money.*] I've served you respectful for two years, sir, but I'd like to say that all that time, in the back of my head, I knew you for the fat, lazy skunk you —

PETER.

Get out! [STETSON goes. *Sound of a motor is heard.* PETER opens the door.] Here! Leave that car alone!

STETSON.

[*Off stage.*] I'll leave it alone in your garage. Don't worry, old fat-head!

[PETER rushes out. He returns in a moment, hot and exhausted. The sound of the motor dies away. PETER sinks into a chair. Enter ALLISON from terrace with the Planet Junior, which she leaves leaning against the open door.]

ALLISON.

Where's your chauffeur gone?

PETER.

[*Grimly.*] To enlist! Your farm has made one soldier already, Allison. Count that to your credit.

ALLISON.

Isn't that splendid! Are you ready, Peter?

PETER.

[*Jumping up.*] Ready? I'm eager! You don't think I'm *lazy*, do you, Allison? Bring on your planet or meteor or whatever it is! I can't wait to get at it! [*He sweeps her out onto the terrace.*]

[*After a moment JEAN comes to door, R., knocks and enters. There is a striking change in his appearance. Shaved, clean, all mud gone, wearing the blue smock, JEAN appears to be a slender, very good-looking young man, with a fine, intelligent face and laughing eyes. He sees the room is empty, goes to window, shows signs of great surprise and goes out again, making signs. Presently he reënters, bringing with him a man of about thirty-four in riding togs. The man is trying to talk and JEAN is trying to stop him.*]

JEAN.

Sh! Sh! Not so loud! Not so loud!

THE MAN.

What the deuce are you doing here?

JEAN.

Sh! I implore you, sh!

THE MAN.

Where's Bob? Is he all right?

JEAN.

Mais oui! He has gone back to camp.

THE MAN.

Thank God! Maybe I haven't had the devil's own time finding you!

JEAN.

But why should you *try* to find me? I telephone ze maid you are not to trouble. To convey zat to you as soon as you come in.

THE MAN.

That wasn't the message I got. She told me you were in trouble and I was to come to you at once. But where, I didn't know! I located your telephone message in this village, galloped over, made inquiries, learned that a Frenchman answering my description might be up here, galloped on expecting to find you or Bob with a broken leg at least, and now you tell me Bob's all right, and I find you looking as fit as a fiddle—my Lord! what's that you're wearing?

JEAN.

You like it, hein? I tink it is ver' pretty.

THE MAN.

For Heaven's sake, give an account of yourself.

JEAN.

An account? Well, your charming young brozzer conduct me on a most glorious hike. Four days and nights we have of ze rain and ze mud. It remind me of La Belle France. We lose our way. We are late. When we find a station your brozzer take ze train. He ask me to tell you. I continue ze road alone.

THE MAN.

Just like Bob. Well, go on.

JEAN.

Go on? It is finished.

THE MAN.

Finished? What are you doing here?

JEAN.

I take what you call ze job.

THE MAN.

Job? What sort of a job?

JEAN.

[*Pointing to his smock.*] I work on ze farm.  
Can you not see?

THE MAN.

Look, old chap, what's the matter? Was the hike too much for you? You never can tell about shock. It plays the queerest pranks on a man. Now look here, Jean, try to get this thing straight——

JEAN.

Non, mon cher Truesdale, suis pas fou! It is quite true. Why should I not take ze job to work on ze farm? What was it you and ze ozzer doctors prescribe when I leave France wiz you? To live out of doors, to take ze wholesome exercise, not to tink about ze war and ze past. Well, I do it! Instead to trespass on your hospitality any longer I come here. I work. I forget ze past, I tink only of ze future, ze glorious future!

TRUESDALE.

Jean, you're cracked. A French officer doesn't take a job as a farm hand! What does an aviator know about farming anyway?

JEAN.

You forget. My fazzer has ze big estate en Bretagne. All ze money he make out of ze tin cans he spend on ze land. It is, what you call it?—his hobby. I know much. Oh, I am ver' happy here.

TRUESDALE.

My dear chap, this is ridiculous. You've overdone. You must come back with me and——

JEAN.

Sh! Here zey come! Say nossing, and remember my name is Duval—Jean Duval.

[*Enter ALLISON from terrace.*]

ALLISON.

Jean, are you waiting for me? [*Sees TRUESDALE.*] Oh, I beg your pardon——

JEAN.

Mademoiselle, permit me, zis is ze Dr. Truesdale. Monsieur, zis is Mees Marbrook, my new, what you call it?—employer. [*They bow.*] You know, Mademoiselle, I telephone Monsieur from zat little vilage where we stop. I anticipate ze need for ze documents to my character. Monsieur is so kind as to be riding near. He drop in. I live wiz Monsieur for three months. He will tell you and ze elderly gentleman all you want to know. N'est-ce-pas, Monsieur?

[*The first vision of ALLISON has enlightened TRUESDALE. He looks from her to JEAN with suppressed amusement.*]

ALLISON.

I'm very glad to see you, Dr. Truesdale. We're rather distant neighbors, aren't we? Won't you sit down?

TRUESDALE.

[*Slightly embarrassed.*] I just stopped in for a moment, Miss Marbrook. If I can be of any service —

[*Enter MARGOT suddenly from kitchen. Her sleeves are rolled up and she wears an apron. The first person she catches sight of is JEAN.*]

MARGOT.

Oh, Jean, how nice you look! I wouldn't have believed it possible!

ALLISON.

Margot! This is Dr. Truesdale, for whom Jean used to work. My sister, Margot, Dr. Truesdale.

MARGOT.

Oh, are you *the* Dr. Truesdale?

TRUESDALE.

Well, I —

JEAN.

[*Proud of his friend.*] He is it, Mademoiselle!

MARGOT.

Oh, I'm so glad to meet you, Dr. Truesdale. I hope you'll tell us all about your adventures!

ALLISON.

Margot, Dr. Truesdale has just stopped for a moment to tell us about Jean. We mustn't detain him.

MARGOT.

About Jean? Well, I think Jean speaks for himself now, don't you? Isn't that smock becoming! Jean, you're the first man we've ever been able to make wear it.

JEAN.

[*With a glance at ALLISON.*] Mademoiselle has made it all herself.

TRUESDALE.

I understand.

JANEY'S VOICE.

[*From kitchen.*] Margot! Do I put the tomatoes in now?

MARGOT.

[*Running to kitchen door.*] Yes, and an onion. And don't let it burn. Keep stirring it, Janey.  
[*She shuts the door.*]

ALLISON.

I'm sure I don't know just what I ought to ask you about Jean.



MARGOT.

It's Peter wants to ask the questions. Where's Peter?

ALLISON.

He's weeding the garden. [*As MARGOT makes a move towards the door.*] Oh, don't call him, Margot. He's working so hard. I never saw Peter so energetic before. It's miraculous what the war spirit can do!

MARGOT.

Well then, we must ask the questions. But I think Jean ought to go out, don't you?

JEAN.

Zere is nossing zat Monsieur can tell you of me, Mademoiselle, zat I am afraid to hear.

MARGOT.

What do you think, Dr. Truesdale?

TRUESDALE.

[*Who is enjoying the situation immensely.*] Well, if Jean wants to stay and hear the worst, I say, let him. It may do him good.

MARGOT.

All right. You begin, Allison.

ALLISON.

Very well. Dr. Truesdale, I'd like to know if—[*she looks at JEAN*] if Jean—is there anything you want to know, Margot?

MARGOT.

Of course there is. I want to know if he's honest.

ALLISON.

Margot! That's insulting!

MARGOT.

Well, it's not *my* fault if he wouldn't go out. I think it's very important to know that, don't you, Dr. Truesdale?

TRUESDALE.

I certainly do. But just what do you mean by honest?

MARGOT.

Well, does he steal?

ALLISON.

Margot!!

JEAN.

Let her be, Mademoiselle, she is right.

TRUESDALE.

[*Thoughtfully.*] Mm, no, he doesn't steal. Not that I know of.

MARGOT.

Is he truthful?

ALLISON.

Oh, Margot dear!!!

TRUESDALE.

Well, I could hardly call him truthful. In fact, he lies extremely well when he wants to.

MARGOT.

There! You see?

JEAN.

Ah, Mademoiselle, you don' understand. It is because I am French. I see things perhaps a little more extravagant zan ze Dr. Truesdale. It is to zat he refers. He is so literal-minded, ze doctor, so lacking in ze imagination—zat he cannot understand——

TRUESDALE.

Oh! Thank you, Jean!

ALLISON.

Was that what you meant, Dr. Truesdale, his—er—Gallic exaggeration?

TRUESDALE.

[Smiling.] Well, perhaps the difference in nationality *has* something to do with it.

JEAN.

Zere! You see?

ALLISON.

I'm sure that's all we want to know, isn't it, Margot?

MARGOT.

Nonsense. Was he really in the French army, Dr. Truesdale, or was that statement a "Gallic exaggeration," as Allison calls it?

TRUESDALE.

No, that's true, I can guarantee that.

MARGOT.

And was he honorably discharged?

TRUESDALE.

He wasn't discharged at all. He's simply on leave. [*Disparagingly.*] He had a slight wound and what we call shock, about which he made a good deal of fuss, I imagine, and got off on the strength of it for six months.

ALLISON.

But he was a good soldier, wasn't he?

TRUESDALE.

[*Same tone.*] Passable, I imagine. He's got one of those little bronze crosses they make such a fuss about, somewhere on his person.

ALLISON.

[*Breathless.*] A *Croix de Guerre*?

TRUESDALE.

Eh, huh.

ALLISON.

Jean, have you really got a *Croix de Guerre*?

JEAN.

[*Shrugging.*] Oh, Mademoiselle, any soldier can get zat nowadays. It is nossing.

ALLISON.

Margot, now aren't you ashamed of asking all those questions?

MARGOT.

Well, I didn't know he had a *Croix de Guerre*, did I? Jean, I apologize.

JEAN.

[*Overwhelmed.*] Mais, Mademoiselle —

TRUESDALE.

Oh, there's no need to make a hero of him. You'll soon find out he's got his bad points. He's an ungrateful dog. I ran across him in a hospital in France, found he wanted a complete change—he seemed a good fellow—so I brought him over with me, gave him comfortable quarters and an easy enough life, and he left me without a minute's notice. Shabby, I call it. I don't guarantee he won't do the same to you.

MARGOT.

Well, we're used to that!

JEAN.

[*To ALLISON.*] No, no, Mademoiselle! Do not believe him. I promise, I—what you call it—swear, I never leave you unless you send me away.

JANEY'S VOICE.

[*From kitchen; desperately.*] Margot, how long must I keep on stirring?

MARGOT.

[*Running to kitchen door.*] Oh, I forgot!  
[*Opens door and calls.*] Take it off now, Janey.

[*JANEY comes to door, fanning herself,*

JANEY.

Table set? Good gracious!

ALLISON.

Janey, this is Dr. Truesdale, one of our neighbors.  
[JANEY looks vaguely from JEAN to TRUESDALE.]  
Our friend, Miss Wimpole.

TRUESDALE.

How do you do?

JANEY.

[After waiting a second to be introduced to  
JEAN:] How do you do? Have you both come for  
lunch?

ALLISON.

[Breaking an awkward pause.] This is Jean,  
Janey, our new man. He's here for keeps.

JEAN.

[Bowing low, not to be outdone by TRUESDALE.]  
Enchanté, Mademoiselle.

[JANEY looks at him wonderingly.]

TRUESDALE.

I must be off this minute.

MARGOT.

Oh, no, please stay for lunch. We haven't heard  
a word about your adventures.

[JEAN looks worried.]

TRUESDALE.

Really, Miss Marbrook, it's awfully good of you,  
but I'm afraid I'm trespassing on —

[JEAN nods approval.]

ALLISON.

We'd love you to stay, Dr. Truesdale, if you only would.

[JEAN *shakes his head at* TRUESDALE.]

TRUESDALE.

[*Ignoring* JEAN's *signal.*] Well, I only put up a defense for decency. I'd be *delighted* to stay.

MARGOT.

Janey and I cooked the lunch.

TRUESDALE.

That doesn't deter me in the least. But I left my horse outside. I'll just put him up somewhere.

MARGOT.

Oh, Jean will take him to the stable. You needn't bother.

TRUESDALE.

[*Brusquely.*] Blanket him well, Jean. He's rather warm. [*To* MARGOT.] I beg pardon. I forget this chap's no longer in my service.

ALLISON.

And, Jean, will you ask Mr. Weston to come in from the garden?

JEAN.

[*Moving to door R.*] Oui, Mademoiselle.

TRUESDALE.

[*Grinning triumphantly.*] Tell him lunch is waiting! It smells delicious, doesn't it, Miss Marbrook?

[JEAN casts a furious glance at TRUESDALE and goes out. ALLISON watches him from window.]

MARGOT.

Now we must hurry. [*She opens door on terrace, revealing table, etc. Then she moves to cupboard.*] Janey, you get the bread and things from the kitchen.

[JANEY goes.]

TRUESDALE.

What can I do?

MARGOT.

[*Taking plates and doylies from cupboard.*] Put these out on the table, will you?

ALLISON.

[*At window.*] Oh!

MARGOT.

What is it, Al?

ALLISON.

Oh, nothing. I'll go help Janey.

[*She goes into kitchen.*]

TRUESDALE.

[*Returning from terrace.*] More, please.

MARGOT.

[*Giving him silver, glasses, etc.*] You're a splendid help. I'm glad the maid left.

TRUESDALE.

So am I.

[*He goes out whistling. Enter PETER very red and hot.*]



MARGOT.

Hello, Peter, lunch is ready.

PETER.

[*Sinking into chair.*] So your young Joffre on horseback told me. I don't think I care for any, thanks. It's rather warm.

[*JANEY enters from kitchen carrying tray of bread, water, etc., meets TRUESDALE coming in, who holds door open for her. They laugh greetings as they pass. JANEY sets table outside.*

MARGOT.

Peter, this is Dr. Truesdale. He's just given Jean a splendid reference. [*To TRUESDALE.*] Mr. Weston ought to be our guardian, only he isn't.

[*TRUESDALE bows.*

PETER.

[*Weakly.*] How de do? Get me an iced drink, will you, Margot?

[*MARGOT starts for kitchen. TRUESDALE stops her.*

TRUESDALE.

I'd suggest waiting for that ice, Mr. Weston. There's a nice *chaise longue* on the terrace. Come out there and let Miss Marbrook give you a cup of tea. [*Helping PETER up.*] Gardening's rather stiff work, isn't it?

PETER.

[*Jauntily, but leaning on TRUESDALE.*] Oh, no, nothing at all—when you get the hang of it.

[He and TRUESDALE go out on the terrace.  
JANEY'S voice is heard saying, "Oh, Mr.  
Weston, how hot you look!" Then she  
comes in.

JANEY.

All ready.

[ALLISON enters from kitchen, carrying tray  
of salad and cold meat.

ALLISON.

Where's Jean?

MARGOT.

What are we to do about him?

ALLISON.

He has to have lunch too.

JANEY.

Not with us.

MARGOT.

Of course not.

JANEY.

Well, I'm not going to wait on the hired man!

ALLISON.

You don't need to, Janey. I shall.

MARGOT.

Mrs. Spencer's coming to wash up. Why can't  
she feed Jean?

ALLISON.

[*Indignant.*] If Jean can fight and get wounded for us, I guess I can give him his lunch without making a fuss about it!

JANEY.

In the kitchen?

ALLISON.

No, here.

MARGOT.

What's the matter with the kitchen, Allison?

ALLISON.

I'm not going to ask *any* man with a *Croix de Guerre* to eat in the kitchen! Here you take these things and go out. You two got lunch, I'm going to serve it.

[MARGOT takes platter of meat, JANEY the bowl of salad.]

JANEY.

[*Going towards terrace.*] We'll help.

ALLISON.

No, I hate every one jumping up. Some one's got to wait. Run along! [JANEY and MARGOT go out on terrace. TRUESDALE is heard to say, "Did you cook the salad, Miss Wimpole?" and PETER, "Shut the door, Margot, it makes a draft." The door closes. ALLISON goes into kitchen and returns at once with covered vegetable dishes on tray. She goes out on terrace. While door is open TRUESDALE'S voice is heard saying, "And you call this a war lunch?" JEAN enters R., and stands by door.]

ALLISON comes in from terrace, shuts door, starts to kitchen, sees JEAN looking at her. Their eyes meet for a second, then both avert their glances.] Jean.

JEAN.

Mademoiselle.

ALLISON.

I'm going to give you luncheon here, Jean.

*[She collects magazines, etc., on console table to R. of kitchen door.]*

JEAN.

Permit me, Mademoiselle.

ALLISON.

Oh, will you, Jean? Take the things off and pull the table out a bit.

*[While he obeys she goes to cupboard and returns with plate, silver, napkins, etc.]*

*JEAN has put magazines on other table. Only the flowers remain. ALLISON puts her load on a chair and starts to spread napkin. JEAN returns in time to lift flowers.*

JEAN.

*[Moving to table down R.]* Zese, zey are enchanting! What you call zem in your tongue, Mademoiselle?

ALLISON.

Snap dragon. They are lovely. I picked them this morning.

JEAN.

[*Stopping short.*] May I put zem back?

ALLISON.

Surely.

[*He does so. Again their eyes meet for half a second.*]

MARGOT'S VOICE.

[*From terrace.*] Allison, where's the butter?

ALLISON.

Coming! Sit down, Jean.

[*She goes into kitchen. JEAN draws up chair to table, but does not sit. The table is out of the direct line of vision from terrace, and when kitchen door is open, it is practically screened. ALLISON reënters from kitchen, carrying butter and teapot on tray and goes out on terrace. We hear her say, "But Peter isn't eating!" and TRUESDALE answers, "Sh! leave him alone." Door shuts. JEAN sits down, looks towards terrace, then at flowers on his table, smiles, takes one, smells it, puts it in his pocket. ALLISON reënters, carrying JEAN'S lunch on the tray, cold meat, salad, vegetables. JEAN hurries to her.*]

JEAN.

Mademoiselle! It ees heavy!

ALLISON.

Oh, no. [*But they carry it between them and rest it on the table. ALLISON removes dishes from tray.*]

I helped you myself. I hope you don't mind. Sit down, Jean.

JEAN.

Mademoiselle, you permit? [He sits down.

ALLISON.

I'll bring you your tea with dessert. Is that the way you like it?

JEAN.

Justement, Mademoiselle.

ALLISON.

Is everything all right?

JEAN.

[Looking at her.] Parfaite.

ALLISON.

[Suddenly embarrassed.] Then I'll go. [She goes. As door opens, MARGOT is heard to say, "Come on, Allison. Vegetables getting cold." JEAN watches her with something akin to rapture. Then the sound of talk and laughter outside depresses him. He is about to eat when an idea strikes him. He rises, places a chair opposite him at table, bows an imaginary lady into it, sits down, smiles at his companion, and then begins to eat. Before using the salt, he passes it to his imaginary companion and continues the game in all its details. Listening to what she says, smiling and enjoying his lunch hugely. Presently ALLISON returns, carrying tray on which is teapot covered by cosy, cup, sugar, etc.,

and saucer of sliced fruit. She puts tray on table and takes JEAN'S plates.] Here you are, Jean. Have you had enough?

[Takes tray with soiled dishes into kitchen and returns at once.]

JEAN.

A too much, as you say, Mademoiselle.

ALLISON.

I'll pour your tea. They may want the pot again outside. [Unconsciously she sits doyn in the chair he has placed opposite him. A triumphant smile dawns on JEAN'S face.] Sugar? [He nods.] And lemon or cream?

JEAN.

Lemon. [As ALLISON pours he adds, pensively.] What a wonderful thing is democracy, Mademoiselle.

ALLISON.

What do you mean, Jean?

JEAN.

Zere you sit, une jeune fille du monde, waiting on a poor soldier like myself. Oh, it is indeed worth fighting for—democracy!

ALLISON.

[Handing him his cup.] Were you in the cavalry, Jean?

JEAN.

Mais non, Mademoiselle. Why you ask?

ALLISON.

You ride very well. I saw you vault on Dr. Truesdale's horse.

JEAN.

Ah, you saw zat. Mille pardons, Mademoiselle! I could not resist. It is zat I love ze horses. I tink I tol' you I was brought up in ze country—on a farm.

ALLISON.

Yes. Our farmers don't ride so well over here.

JEAN.

[*Hastily.*] In ze army I was in ze aviation, Mademoiselle—juste a mechanic, you know.

ALLISON.

A mechanic? I am sure you have flown, Jean.

JEAN.

Mademoiselle; why you say zat?

ALLISON.

I don't know. You *look* as if you had flown. It must be wonderful.

JEAN.

[*Intensely, his eyes aglow.*] It is like nossing else in ze world! It is Heaven!

[*Then suddenly he shivers.*]

ALLISON.

What is it, Jean?



JEAN.

It can be Hell, too. [*He lifts his eyes and meets hers full of sympathy.*] But no, I do not believe in ze Hell any longer.

[*TRUESDALE enters quietly from terrace and starts for kitchen. ALLISON and JEAN are screened by the open door.*

TRUESDALE.

[*Speaking to kitchen.*] Miss Marbrook, they're clamoring for tea. [*He then perceives the two at the table.*] Oh!

ALLISON.

[*Jumping up.*] I was just bringing it.

[*She takes the teapot and goes out, leaving the door open.*

MARGOT'S VOICE.

[*Outside.*] Sh! Peter's asleep!

JEAN.

[*Low to TRUESDALE.*] You were right, Monsieur, ze lunch was as delicious as it smelt.

[*JANEY enters, carrying a teacup from which she is still drinking, and eating cake.*

JANEY.

[*Low.*] Allison says we're to come in here and let Mr. Weston sleep.

[*MARGOT enters, carrying a tray of dishes.*

MARGOT.

Sh! we mustn't wake Pèter! He's awfully tired.

[*She starts for kitchen. JEAN relieves her of*

92 ALLISON MAKES HAT  
tray and goes into kitchen with it. MARGOT returns on tiptoe to terrace. ALLISON enters on tiptoe from terrace, carrying tray.

ALLISON.

[*In whisper.*] Mrs. Spencer's coming to wash up. [*She goes into kitchen.*]

TRUESDALE.

[*At window, R., low.*] Here's a motor driving up.

JANEY.

[*Still eating, joins him at window.*] Two men in it!

[MARGOT has reëntered with hands full of dishes. She tiptoes to window and then, oblivious of the sleeping PETER, lets out a wild yell.

MARGOT.

Oh!!! It's Stephen! Allison, here's Stephen!

[*She puts her dishes on table and rushes out*  
R. ALLISON runs in from kitchen.

ALLISON.

Where's Stephen?

JANEY.

Out there! And Roy Parcher!

[ALLISON rushes out. JANEY takes her cup and the dishes MARGOT has left into the kitchen. PETER appears somewhat disheveled at the terrace door.

PETER.

[*Sleepily.*] What in thunder is the row?

TRUESDALE.

A gentleman called Stephen seems to be arriving.

PETER.

Not really!

[*He hurriedly crosses to window up R.*  
JANEY joins him from kitchen. JEAN appears in kitchen door.

JEAN.

[*To TRUESDALE, who stands by terrace door*]  
But who is Stephen? [TRUESDALE shrugs.

[STEPHEN MARBROOK enters R., completely surrounded by sisters. Being a MARBROOK, he is, of course, good-looking. He is about twenty-nine and wears the uniform of a captain in the artillery.

ALLISON AND MARGOT.

[*Together*]. Stephen, how did you get here?—  
Why didn't you let us know?—Oh, it's so good to see you, etc.

STEPHEN.

[*At last permitted to speak.*] Didn't know myself. Got leave unexpectedly. Hello, Janey! How are you, Mr. Weston? [Looks at TRUESDALE.

ALLISON.

Dr. Truesdale, my brother Stephen.

[JEAN disappears discreetly into kitchen.  
ROY enters and stands unnoticed at door.]

STEPHEN.

Glad to know you, sir. [They shake hands.

ALLISON MAKES HAY  
JANEY.  
Here's Mr. Parcher, Allison.

ALLISON.  
Hello again, Roy. It's awfully nice to see you.  
How did you and Stephen happen to come together?

ROY.  
Pure luck. We met on the train. I offered to run  
him out. How are you, Allison? Mr. Weston!  
Well, Miss Wimpole, this is great! I didn't expect  
to see you again so soon.

JANEY.  
Neither did I. How did you get leave?

ROY.  
I didn't. I came up to West Point on business as  
aide to General Glynn. I'm just off for the day.

JANEY.  
[*Rather taking possession of him.*] Dr. Trues-  
dale—Mr. Parcher. [They shake hands.]

MARGOT.  
Well, Janey, we've enough men now, haven't we?  
We'll have a real Fourth of July house party!

STEPHEN.  
Nothing doing. I have thirty-six hours' leave,  
and I've consumed nineteen of it already getting  
here. The train service is a mess. [*Consulting  
wrist watch.*] I've got to get the six o'clock back  
from New York. That means I've three-quarters  
of an hour at the most to stay.

ALLISON MAKES HAY

MARGOT.

Good gracious, why did you come at all!

STEPHEN.

Well, I wanted a glimpse of you and the p  
and I wanted particularly to talk to Allison.

ALLISON.

To me, Stephen dear? [He n

JANEY.

Well, then, we'll vamoose!

PETER.

I think I shall go to my room and get a little  
[He quietly secures his bottle and goes  
stairs.

MARGOT.

[Coming to STEPHEN.] Am I de trop  
Stephen?

STEPHEN.

[Putting an arm about her.] Just a few minu  
Do you mind, Kitten?

MARGOT.

No. Come on, we'll all go for a walk.

TRUESDALE.

I think I must say good-bye, Miss Marbrook.

JANEY.

No, you can't. We need you for a fourth. Co  
on, Roy. Margot'll show us over the place.

MARGOT.

[To TRUESDALE.] Yes—do come. I'll take you down by the tenant house and round the lake.

[She gets her hat.

ROY.

See you later, Allison.

JANEY.

[As they go out.] That was a slip I just made. I didn't mean to call you Roy, of course!

ROY.

Why not?

[They disappear.

MARGOT.

Ready, Dr. Truesdale? Au 'voir, mes enfants.

[They go out. STEPHEN has been silently looking around him. ALLISON watches him apprehensively. As soon as they are alone she speaks.

ALLISON.

Stephen dear, what is it? Anything serious?

STEPHEN.

Yes, Allison, I'm afraid it is.

ALLISON.

Is it about you? Are you going over?

STEPHEN.

No, it's about you.

ALLISON.

Me?

ALLISON MAKES HAY

STEPHEN.

You—and this farm.

ALLISON.

What do you mean?

*[She sits down. He leans against table  
her.]*

STEPHEN.

Allison, you wrote me when you took this that you wanted to raise food and economize. I didn't object. I rather liked the idea. I hate to think of you two girls sitting idle in New York at this particular time. But last week I got our quarterly statement from the bank. Did you get yours?

ALLISON.

*[Looking apprehensively towards the desk.]* I think so, Stephen. I haven't opened it yet.

STEPHEN.

Then you don't know that your four months' economy have cost you nineteen thousand dollars?

ALLISON.

Stephen! Not really!

STEPHEN.

*[Taking paper out of his wallet.]* Here are the figures. I wish you'd explain them to me. I don't suppose you kept any accounts.

ALLISON.

I tried to at first. But there was so much to do and they were so confusing! It always came to

that we had spent more than we had, which, of course, was absurd. How could we spend it when we didn't have it?

STEPHEN.

Very easily. It's often done.

*[He hands her the sheet of figures.]*

ALLISON.

*[Taking it gingerly.]* I can't understand. The farm seemed to me so cheap. All this land and the house and barns for six thousand dollars. And Cousin Alice pays eight thousand *rent* for her little apartment!

STEPHEN.

*In* New York. *On* Madison Avenue. But I'm not complaining about that. It seems to me reasonable enough. The question is what have you done with the rest?

ALLISON.

I don't know. We got *only* necessities.

STEPHEN.

H'm! Suppose you let me see your check book, Allison. Do you mind?

ALLISON.

Of course not.

*[She gets the incriminating book from the desk. STEPHEN sits at table, she stands beside him. Later sits on arm of his chair.]*

STEPHEN.

*[Reading.]* "Francoise, hats, Pendle, groceries," —we'll skip the small ones. Here we are, "David



telligent about it I didn't interfere. It's wonderful how much Margot learned in six weeks. And they didn't charge her any tuition. She got it all free!

STEPHEN.

[*Still figuring.*] Free perhaps, but not cheap at the price. Judging from this, Margot's agricultural education cost you in the neighborhood of two thousand dollars. What's this Davis and Co. fifteen hundred?

ALLISON.

Oh, that was for the motor. We couldn't use the town car out here, and we *had* to have a motor.

STEPHEN.

Why not a horse?

ALLISON.

We're so far from anywhere it takes *hours* to drive. We got the car second-hand. It really was a great bargain for a Pierce-Arrow.

STEPHEN.

You might have got a Ford a little cheaper.

ALLISON.

But neither Margot nor I can run a Ford, and, of course, we weren't going to keep a chauffeur.

STEPHEN.

I see. What's this James Barney, seventeen hundred and twelve?

ALLISON.

Oh, that *was* an unexpected expense. That was for the artesian well. But we couldn't help that.

ALLISON MAKES HAY

We found the water wasn't *drinkable*, so th  
to bore.

STEPHEN.

[*Really annoyed.*] Why didn't you know  
the water before you bought the place?

ALLISON.

But how *should* we have known? Even th  
mer owner didn't know!

STEPHEN.

[*Ironic.*] Oh, didn't he! Perhaps he jus  
lected to mention it.

ALLISON.

Oh, Stephen, of course he wouldn't have  
lected anything so important. He was a nic  
man. Do you realize you are suggesting he w  
deliberately to poison us!

STEPHEN.

Well, I feel rather like poisoning *him*, so I  
see why he should have been above a simila  
pulse!

ALLISON.

Of course, we could have bought bottled w  
but in the long run that would have been, just a  
pensive.

STEPHEN.

It takes a pretty long run to consume sever  
hundred dollars' worth of bottled water. But r  
mind. The well's in now. There's no use fu  
any more over the details. Do you realize, All

you've been living at the rate of sixty thousand a year? You've used up all your income and all of Margot's, and as we can't touch our principal till Margot comes of age, which is two years off, you've already drawn two thousand dollars of mine. The upshot of it all is you've got to stop this crazy farm scheme and come home.

ALLISON.

Home? Where? To New York in July? And the house is rented. Where would we go?

STEPHEN.

Go? Anywhere. To a hotel. The bridal suite at the Ritz would be cheap compared to this. But you can visit. Cousin Alice would be delighted to have you at Bar—there are a dozen places——

ALLISON.

No, Stephen, I can't do that. I couldn't bear to visit now. We've got to stay on the farm. [STEPHEN *makes a movement.*] But don't you see, we've bought everything now. All that was initial expense. Now we can be really economical. [STEPHEN *laughs.*] No, no, I *mean* it. The maids have gone, well, we won't get any more. We'll do our own work. There, do you believe me now?

STEPHEN.

Don't be absurd, Allison. You can't do without servants, and you and Margot can't live here in the country alone.

ALLISON.

We'll have neighbors, nice farm people, and we'll have—a—a—hired man—perhaps——

STEPHEN.

Worse and worse. [*He crosses.*] It's no use, Allison. The money's gone and I'm thankful it's not more. You shut up the place. Perhaps we can even sell it or rent it, and you and Margot come back to civilization. [*He looks at his watch.*] Say you will, Allison, and let me go with a free mind.

[ALLISON, *though sitting still, is not taking it as lightly as* STEPHEN. *She is a prey to very real emotion.*

ALLISON.

[*After a pause, low.*] No, Stephen, I can't do that. I *can't*. You don't understand. I realize I've been a fool, a silly, extravagant little fool. I didn't know anything about money. How should I? Whenever I've wanted anything I've just gone and got it and had it charged. But, Stephen, I *was* serious about this, even if I did go about it so crazily. I wanted to do something *real*, and do it *myself* to help in the war.

STEPHEN.

I'm sorry, Al dear, but don't you see economy was what would help in the war, and you haven't been very economical, have you?

ALLISON.

But going away now won't help that, Stephen. The money's gone and visiting Cousin Alice won't bring it back. Oh, it would be *too* humiliating to have to go now! And I love the place, Stephen. You've no idea how hard I've worked over it. I *can't* go. I'm sorry, Stephen, but [*softly*] I, I *won't* go.

STEPHEN.

Al, I've only a few minutes. You mustn't be stubborn. I've thought this all out and you must take my word for it. Please say you'll give this up without my forcing you to it.

ALLISON.

Forcing me?

STEPHEN.

Well, I can, you know. After all, you haven't any money, not a cent, and I *can* refuse to let you go on drawing on my account.

[Pause. Then ALLISON *speaks softly*.

ALLISON.

How much of your money have I used, Stephen?

STEPHEN.

Oh, nothing much now. I counted the rent of the town house all yours, because you were living in it. A few hundred dollars perhaps.

ALLISON.

Exactly, Stephen.

STEPHEN.

[*Referring to the bank statement and making a calculation.*] Exactly four hundred and thirty dollars. Of course it's nothing and I can easily manage to tide you and Margot over the year, unless you force me to —

ALLISON.

[*Coming close to him.*] To refuse? [*She puts her hands on his shoulders.*] You couldn't do that,

ALLISON MAKES HAY

Stephen. You may *think* you could, I couldn't. I know my Stephen. [*She kisses him.*] But don't worry. I'm not going to force you *brightens.*] And I'm not going to take any of your money.

STEPHEN.

What do you mean?

ALLISON.

It's not for *your* sake, Stephen, because at heart you're *just* as *anxious* to help me *can be*. I know, because I know how *I'd* feel were in difficulties. But I'm not going to help me, Stephen, for my own sake. Do see, for the first time in my life I've tried something real and I've made a mess of it. I never get back my self-respect unless I try to get out of it somehow by myself. I'm going to leave here, Stephen, at the farm.

STEPHEN.

Without money? You can't. What's your plan—to borrow from Dorothea? She's got everything *she* has to that French hospital.

ALLISON.

I'm not going to borrow from any one. I told you?

STEPHEN.

But what —

ALLISON.

Oh, I'll manage. Don't you worry.

STEPHEN.

Allison, what in the world ——

ALLISON.

Sh!

[Enter JANEY, ROY, MARGOT and TRUESDALE, R., and with them MRS. BRADLEY.]

JANEY.

Are we butting in? Here's Rose back again.

MRS. BRADLEY.

Hello, Allison. [*Formally.*] How do you do, Captain? [*Then, laughing.*] How are you, Stephen?  
[*They shake hands.*]

ROY.

If you want to get to Gotham by six, we'll have to crank up, Steve.

MARGOT.

Oh, what a shame!

JANEY.

Disgusting! Must you go too, Roy? Why can't Rose take Stephen back?

MRS. BRADLEY.

You forget, Janey, I'm not going near New York. [*To STEPHEN.*] We're at the sea, a wretched place! It doesn't agree with the children, but I guess we'll stay there, judging by the houses I've seen to-day.

ALLISON.

Mrs. Bradley, do you still want to rent this house?

ALLISON MAKES HAY

MRS. BRADLEY.

Indeed I do! I've been walking around Margot and I like it better than ever.

ALLISON.

Well, you can have it! [She

MARGOT.

Allison!

MRS. BRADLEY.

You're not serious?

ALLISON.

Perfectly.

MRS. BRADLEY.

You're willing to give it up?

ALLISON.

I have to. It's too expensive.

STEPHEN.

[*Going to her.*] Good for you, Allison. You  
a brick! I know what it cost you to give in.  
I'll go now with a peaceful mind.

ALLISON.

Will you, Stephen? That's good.

[*She kisses*

JANEY.

Oh, Margot, now you can come visit me! I  
going to cruise and put in at all the naval sta-



MARGOT.

That's so, I can. Hurrah!

STEPHEN.

We must be off. Come on, every one.

[*He goes out jubilant.* MARGOT, TRUESDALE  
and MRS. BRADLEY with him. JANEY stops  
at door.

Roy.

[*A little awkwardly.*] I say, Allison, I haven't  
seen much of you this trip.

ALLISON.

No, we'll do better next time,

JANEY.

[*At door.*] They're calling you, Roy.  
[*She goes out.*

Roy.

Coming, Al?

ALLISON.

In just a minute.

[*ROY goes. ALLISON stands a second alone  
on the stage, her hands pressed together.  
MARGOT runs in.*

MARGOT.

Stephen left his coat. [*She picks it up.*] Allison,  
what does it mean? Why have you decided  
to rent the farm?

of age and we can touch our capital, I'll pay all this back to you.

MARGOT.

And what will you do now, live all alone in the tenant house?

ALLISON.

Oh, I'll have Grumpy and I'll get some country woman to come and help with the work—not a real servant, you know.

MARGOT.

It's preposterous!

ALLISON.

[*Humbly.*] Perhaps it is, Margot, but I can't help it.

MARGOT.

I give you up! . . . Well, when do we move into the hole?

ALLISON.

We?

MARGOT.

If *you* stay, *I* stay.

ALLISON.

Margot—you mean it?

MARGOT.

It's my farm just as much as it is yours, Allison. Think I'd go back on you for Janey, or all the naval stations in the world!

ALLISON MAKES HAY

ALLISON.

Margot!

*[She kisses her. The comedy drolously near emotional drama atment. TRUESDALE appears at door.]*

TRUESDALE.

They're waiting for you, ladies. The at the verge of departure.

ALLISON.

We're coming.

*[They hurry out, carrying STEPHEN. TRUESDALE comes into the room, enters cautiously from terrace. T of many voices can be heard soj outside.]*

JEAN.

Have zey gone?

TRUESDALE.

Going. Sorry for you, old chap. It's isn't it?

JEAN.

What iz all over?

TRUESDALE.

Love's young dream.

JEAN.

What you mean?

TRUESDALE.

Don't you know? She's engaged.

JEAN.

*Who's engaged?*

TRUESDALE.

Miss Allison—to the young lieutenant!

JEAN.

Mees Allison, to zat popinjay? Impossible!

TRUESDALE.

It's true. The sister told me.

JEAN.

*[Looking out of open door.]* I don' believe you,  
*I don' believe you.*

TRUESDALE.

*[Looking out of window.]* Well, watch them say  
good-bye. That's a sure sign. There, she's saying  
good-bye now.

JEAN.

*[Intent.]* To her brozzer!

TRUESDALE.

That was warm enough certainly. Here comes  
your young popinjay. Now see if I'm right!

JEAN.

Oh, ciel!

*[A moment of intense silence follows, both  
men looking fixedly at the group out-  
side. Then they relax. A satisfied smile  
spreads slowly over JEAN'S features.  
TRUESDALE scratches his head, thought-  
fully.]*

*ALLISON MAKES HAY*

TRUESDALE.

Well, you know the Anglo-Saxons are restrained people!

[*JEAN does not answer. He turns an omniscient shrug, and proceeds a cigarette as the*

CURTAIN FALLS

### ACT III

*The scene represents the kitchen of the Tenant House, a low studded room with nondescript plaster walls. The back wall, moving from R. to L., is broken by the door to the wood-shed, the sink, set in the wall, a good-sized stove, and a door leading into the pantry. In the centre of the left wall are two windows, and nearer the audience, the entrance door. Beneath the windows is a low, covered water-box, up beyond it a table on which stands a telephone and a simple tea-tray. There are two doors in the right wall leading to the two bedrooms and between them an old but businesslike roll-top desk and a small tool chest. Above the desk hangs a bright Liberty Loan poster. Several other war posters relieve the dullness of the walls. The windows are curtained in bright, cheap material. A large table stands just R. of center stage. Several straight chairs and one easy chair, all rather shabby, complete the furniture. Between the windows above the water-box hangs a tin dipper. When the door to wood-shed is open, stacked wood, and a five gallon can of kerosene on a wooden box can be seen. Through the pantry door one sees shelves, the lower one laden with dishes, the upper stocked with jellies and canned goods. The time is about half-past four of an afternoon in late September.*

## ALLISON MAKES HAY

When the curtain rises MRS. PRAY, a woman in the early thirties, is dis the stove, stirring a mixture in a larg ing kettle. A covered canner is a stove. MRS. SPENCER, a tall, gaun woman around fifty, stands at the tab liquid from another preserving kettl tons and glasses which are spread on before her. ALLISON is sitting L. putting covers on cartons and past on cartons and glasses. She wear print dress and a pink housekeepe. Her sleeves are rolled up.

MRS. SPENCER.

[Finishing one tray and starting anot has a high, nasal voice, talks rapidly an key.] There! that's five dozen mint a geranium! Guess we'll do full ten to-da

[ALLISON rises, takes saucepan of )  
fin from stove and pours it on

MRS. PRAY.

And seven yesterday, that's seventeen much more do you reckon we'll make?

[She takes a finished tray from t pantry and returns to stove. All ing quickly and without fuss.

ALLISON.

It all depends on how many orders we g jellies aren't going so well, Mrs. Pray, as tables and fruit. Every one seems to put own jellies.

MRS. SPENCER.

I reckon no one's puttin' up better mint jelly than this.

MRS. PRAY.

You wuz discouraged about the vegetables too, Miss Marbrook, until you took that trip round in the Ford and saw the grocers personal —

MRS. SPENCER.

Surprisin' how business lep up after you saw the grocers personal!

ALLISON.

I was dreadfully frightened on that trip! Margot and I used to sit outside for ages getting up courage to go into the shops, but I must say every one was awfully nice to us.

MRS. SPENCER.

I reckon mos' everybody's kind o' nice to you, Miss Marbrook. It's along o' the way you hev' with them. I allus says, kindness gits as kindness gives! Take the way you started this Liberty Loan Club now.—I'll take the Chili sauce now, Mis' Pray, if you're ready. [MRS. PRAY *hands her the second kettle, takes the empty one to sink, fills it with water, replaces it on stove, then helps* ALLISON *at table.* MRS. SPENCER *dips Chili sauce into cartons with measuring cup.*] You ain't the fust city lady as has talked this war to me. There's been plenty druv up in their own autymobiles preachin' economy. Economy! to Liza Spencer, who's raised seven and buried five on thirty-two acres. I has my own notion of them folks, and I



ALLISON MAKES HAY

will admit, Miss Marbrook, I wuz right ;  
that fust day you come round to watch my  
But land's sake! a less assumin' bit than y  
never cum out of New York City!

ALLISON.

[*Laughing.*] But I didn't *know* anythin  
Spencer. How *could* I be assuming?

MRS. SPENCER.

My goodness, that's no test! Think the  
ladies with their silk stockings and chauffeur  
anythin' about economy, yet they can talk to  
never wasted a pea pod as glib as ——

ALLISON.

Oh, don't, Mrs. Spencer!. I used to be  
bad as that myself.

MRS. PRAY.

[*About to carry off another tray.*] Well,  
I don't care if we never sell another jar of  
or jelly again. It's been a real Godsend to  
Liberty Loan Club. The lonesomeness of  
place was getting on my nerves. You know  
to live up to Canaan before I was married and  
wuz a right lot of things goin' on up there. So  
to me I never *could* get used to bein' so far  
folks. This cannin' all together has been more  
parties to me than anythin' I knowed since I  
girl.

ALLISON.

It *has* been fun, hasn't it?

MRS. SPENCER.

You should hev seen his face when I laid out that fifty-dollar bond on the breakfast table. "Who died, Liza," he says, "an' lef' you a fortune?" "No one died," sez I. "I earned that cannin' down to Miss Marbrook's; we all got one." Well, he was that tickled! "Guess I can quit farmin' now," he says, an' he chuckled till he choked over his pie.

ALLISON.

We ought to have more bonds soon if only we can get the jellies to sell. We've heaps of apples in our orchard.

MRS. PRAY.

Perkins' man from Springfield been round to-day lookin' for apples. My cousin Hetty Richards 'phoned he was down to their place.

ALLISON.

Oh, our apples aren't good enough to sell. But they're fine for jelly.

MRS. SPENCER.

Well, what we don't sell we kin use up ourselves. I reckon you'll be gettin' married soon, Miss Marbrook, and young fellers kin always get away with a pile o' sweets.

ALLISON.

Married?

MRS. PRAY.

[*Coyly.*] Miss Margot told us about your fiancée, the young lieutenant.

ALLISON.

Oh, did she? But *we're* not going to be married soon. Mr. Parcher's going to war.

MRS. SPENCER.

I know my opinion ain't been asked, but I says, if they're goin' over, marry 'em fust. No tellin' whether you'll get the chance later. Men folks is onsartin at the best and in war time—well, comin' from New England where men is scarce, I allus says, a bird in the hand is worth —

MRS. PRAY.

[*Interrupting.*] 'Tain't as if you couldn't afford to bring up a baby *decent*. Now with Sally Budd's girl down to the cross roads, it's diff'runt. They ain't neither of them got a cent. But from what Miss Margot said about *your* young man —

ALLISON.

[*Painfully embarrassed.*] Really, Mrs. Pray, we don't — [*With tremendous relief.*] Oh, here's Margot! She's frightfully late.

[*Enter MARGOT, L., carrying several packages. Her hands and face are besmirched with grease and soot. She wears khaki breeches, brown shoes and puttees that show hard usage, a loose sleeveless leather vest, with big pockets, and a white shirt, open at the throat, and with the sleeves rolled up. The latent tomboy in MARGOT has come to the fore. She rejoices in her masculine attire and occupation, and plays her rôle with something of a swagger and a good deal of recently acquired slang.*

MARGOT.

[*Putting packages on water-box.*] Hello! Here's the grub. Afternoon, Mis' Spencer, afternoon, Mis' Pray.

[*They return the greeting.*]

ALLISON.

Good gracious, Margot! What is the matter?

MARGOT.

Carbon in the carbureter! Just managed to get home. Going to blow kerosene through it.

ALLISON.

Can't Jean help you?

MARGOT.

Oh, Jean's out with the men threshing. I'm not going to disturb him. I'll have it fixed in time to take the men to the trolley.

[*She crosses to wood-shed.*]

ALLISON.

Hadn't you better wash your face before you go out again, Margot?

MARGOT.

Oh, all right—though it's not much use unless I wear a gas mask!

[*She goes into bedroom up r., leaving door ajar.*]

MRS. PRAY.

Where's that purty white dog o' yourn to-day, Miss Margot?

MRS. PRAY.

[*Hastily.*] Here's some on this saucer, Mister Dooval.  
[*She brings saucer and spoon.*]

JEAN.

You are too kind, Madame! [*He tastes.*] But it is delicious! Epatant! It does you all proud! And zey say ze French women can cook! Bah! [*He takes another spoonful. The two women are delighted.*] A thousand thanks, Madame!

[*He hands back the saucer and is starting for the door, L., when MARGOT appears at bedroom door, R.*]

MARGOT.

Oh, Jean! I stopped at Dr. Truesdale's on the way home. He gave me some letters for you. Here they are.

[*She crosses to him, taking large envelope out of her pocket.*]

JEAN.

Merci, Mademoiselle.

[*Going again.*]

MARGOT.

And there's a cable in there too. Dr. Truesdale was just going to 'phone you when I came in.

ALLISON.

[*Startled; rises.*] A cable?

JEAN.

Oh, thank you, Mademoiselle. I will open it at once. [*He turns at door.*] Au 'voir, Madame, Madame.

ALLISON MAKES HAY

*[With a little bow to each of the ladies, he goes out. As he passes the windows he is seen opening the boxes of letters.]*

ALLISON.

A cable! What can it be?

MARGOT.

That's what I'm wondering. You know I must be up soon now. I've counted it out. I have to learn to do without him.

ALLISON.

*[Slowly.]* Do without Jean . . .  
*[She goes to door and stands looking. MARGOT goes into wood-shed, and is seen filling small can from big kerosene.]*

MRS. SPENCER.

Ain't he the comical feller though, with fine manners!

MRS. PRAY.

*[Wistfully.]* I like 'em. I wish we had more of 'em in these parts.

MRS. SPENCER.

Huh! Can't you jes' see Amos Spencer up in his stockin' feet an' makin' me a box time I hands him the *Milford Chronicle*? ain't as if this Mister Dooval was a sissy. For Amos I mean, that your Mister Dooval get work out of the hayin' an' threshin' men thar one in four counties—an' he only a Frenchy

ALLISON.

[*Turning.*] Oh, you mustn't talk like that about the French, Mrs. Spencer!

MRS. SPENCER.

[*Who has been washing dishes, etc., at sink.*] Well, I know, but it's kind o' hard to think o' those little foreign fellers amountin' to so much, ain't it?  
[*Telephone rings.*]

MRS. PRAY.

I'm up, I'll go. [*She takes up 'phone.*] Hello . . . yes . . . Oh, Mis' Spencer, it's your girl, Tabitha.

MRS. SPENCER.

[*Busy at sink.*] Well, what does she want?

MRS. PRAY.

Your ma says what is it you want? . . . Oh . . . Mis' Spencer, she says you fergot your teeth. Shall she fetch 'em down?

MRS. SPENCER.

Now what ails the girl! Tell her I don't need my teeth to taste Chili sauce with.

MRS. PRAY.

[*Into 'phone.*] Your ma says she don't need 'em, Tabitha. [*She rings off.*]

MRS. SPENCER.

[*A little annoyed.*] I left 'em home a' purpose. They're a new set an' I don't like to wear 'em out on talkin'! There, I reckon this kettle is clean.

ALLISON MAKES HAY

I'd leave the other scaldin' till morning  
you, Miss Marbrook.

*[By this time the glasses, etc., are all  
and labelled and MRS. PRAY and  
have carried them to the pantry.  
SPENCER has washed up all the cups  
and utensils. MARGOT reënters  
wood-shed, carrying gallon can of  
to find JANEY standing in door.  
JANEY wears a charming frock  
and carries a frivolous parasol.]*

MARGOT.

Hello! Where did you come from?

ALLISON.

Janey!

JANEY.

I came down from Lenox this afternoon  
been staying with the Waltons. I'm going  
the week-end with sister. She's having corn

MARGOT.

Who?

JANEY.

I'm not to tell you. It's a *surprise*.

ALLISON.

Mrs. Spencer, this is our friend Miss V  
Mrs. Pray, Miss Wimpole.

JANEY.

How de do?



MRS. SPENCER.

Pleased to meet you. Kind o' warm for September, ain't it?

[MRS. PRAY bows and murmurs "*How de do.*"

JANEY.

There's a most frightful smell outside, Allison. I can't imagine what —

MARGOT.

[*Whose scorn for JANEY's idle and luxurious appearance is boundless.*] You haven't got much imagination, then. It's a skunk. [*At JANEY's horror-struck start, she adds sweetly.*] A pet one.

MRS. SPENCER.

[*Taking off her apron.*] Guess we'll be gettin' on now, Miss Marbrook.

ALLISON.

Won't you stay and have tea? [*Glancing at tray.*] It's all ready.

MRS. SPENCER.

[*With native tact.*] Not to-day, thanks. Tomorrow bein' Fair day and we goin' off early, I've got a bit of extry bakin' to do.

MRS. PRAY.

So've I.

[*They get their hats from ALLISON's bedroom, down R. ALLISON goes into pantry.*

JANEY.

[*Sitting. To MARGOT.*] What are you going to do with that?

ALLISON MAKES HAY

MARGOT.

Blow the carbon out of the Ford. [*With significant glance at her frock.*] You can cor  
[ALLISON reënters with plate on a  
something covered with oiled paper  
meets the women coming out of the  
room.]

ALLISON.

Here are some little pats of sweet butter children, Mrs. Pray. I made some for Mrs. ley's youngsters and they loved them.

MRS. PRAY.

Oh, Miss Marbrook! [*She lifts*

MRS. SPENCER.

Well, now, ain't those cute? Where'd you fancy moulds?

ALLISON.

Mr. Duval whittled them for me. Would like to have some, Mrs. Spencer? I've more cellar. I'll get them for you. [*She goes*

MARGOT.

[*Coming forward.*] Oh, Mrs. Pray, you bring the children up soon. Our pigs had yesterday. [*They laugh.*] Oh, you know mean—and they're awfully cunning.  
[*The two women go out laughing.*]

JANEY.

Well, you certainly look busy. What have been doing with those women?

MARGOT.

Jelly. That's Allison's Liberty Loan Club. They can twice a week and sell the stuff all around. See the label. [*She gets a carton from table up L.*] Allison designed it.

JANEY.

[*Reading.*] "Liberty Loan Brand, put up by the Housewives' Association of East Corners, Connecticut." Why, I saw a jar with that label at the Waltons'. Isn't that surprising?

MARGOT.

Not very. We got the social register and wrote letters to every likely person within a hundred miles, it seems to me. And we called personally on the grocers. In business, Janey, there's nothing so important as *personality*. Allison's personality is our most valuable business asset. Mine's too blunt. But I'm learning.

JANEY.

Good gracious, Margot, do you like doing all these things?

MARGOT.

Like it? I love it. Never had such a great summer in my life!

JANEY.

But sister says there aren't any men here except that Dr. Truesdale.

MARGOT.

Did she tell you what he's doing—turning his big house into a hospital? It's to be for cases of

ALLISON MAKES HAY

shock—that's his specialty, you know, and be in charge. Isn't it splendid!

JANEY.

[*Slyly.*] Oh, that's the way the wind blows.

MARGOT.

Nonsense. I'm not a bit interested in any of that mush any more, Janey. I believe in the independence of women. This war is going to make a great difference in our position, Dr. T. says, and thank goodness I know it in time of advantage of it! Dr. Truesdale and I are good pals, and I'm going to help him at the hospital and all that. But nothing squashy.

JANEY.

Goodness, Margot, you've changed! [ALLISON.] Oh, Allison, Rose sent me for vegetables and she wants you and Margot to dinner to-night to meet—I'm not to tell.

MARGOT.

Drat it, will we have to dress?

ALLISON.

Of course, Margot, and it will do you. What sort of vegetables, Janey? It's late to know; we've only corn and beets and tomatoes. [She gets basket.] We'll go out and you can get for yourself.

MARGOT.

[*Taking basket.*] I'll do it. Come on, [She swings out, basket in one hand, in the other.]

JANEY.

[*At door.*] Allison, have you heard from Roy lately?

ALLISON.

Not since he was transferred to Camp Upton. Why?

JANEY.

Oh, nothing special. I just asked.

ALLISON.

Good gracious, it's Friday and Tuesday was my letter day! I'll write a line now and Margot can take it down when she goes. See you later, Janey.

[*Exit JANEY. ALLISON straightens kitchen table, goes to pantry door, is seen to be counting something, goes to desk, makes entry in ledger and sighs. Reënter MARGOT.*]

MARGOT.

Forgot the trowel. [*Crosses to wood-shed and reaches through door for trowel.*] What's the matter, Al? You're not doing more accounts! I saw you at it this morning before I was up.

ALLISON.

I wanted to see where we stood before the first. And we're still fifty dollars short on that four hundred and thirty of Stephen's, Margot, even with the rye and the potatoes. I'd been counting on the jellies, but orders are terribly slow coming in.

MARGOT.

Great Scot, Al, did it ever occur to you before this summer how hard it is to make fifty dollars!

## ALLISON MAKES HAY

ALLISON.

I know, and it's so easy to spend it!

MARGOT.

When I think of the way I used to buy  
for the fun of buying 'em, my blood ru  
Well, I must be off. Janey's picking corr  
frock!

[*She goes. ALLISON takes out no  
and begins to write.*

ALLISON.

[*Writing.*] "My dear Roy" . . .  
*to think and reads.*] "My dear Roy"  
"My dear Roy . . . I didn't write be  
cause there wasn't anything much to tell you  
[*There is a knock at door.*] Come!

[*Door opens. A big, hot, cross-look  
in shirt sleeves stands there.*

THE MAN.

[*Crossly.*] Got any apples?

ALLISON.

Apples? Won't you come in?

THE MAN.

No time to set. I'm from Perkins, Spr  
I'm payin' one seventy-five fer Class A, G  
Spyes, or Spitz.

ALLISON.

I'm so sorry. We haven't any Class A.  
apples have something the matter with them  
you want any potatoes? We've the *nicest* p

THE MAN.

Full up on 'tates. I'll be goin' then.

ALLISON.

Wait a minute. Doesn't Perkins carry preserves?  
We've some delicious —

THE MAN.

Nothin' doin'. I haven't got no breath to waste  
on fancy stuff. Done more'n a day's work as  
'tis — [*Seeing dipper.*] I'll take a dipper of  
water if you've no objection. [*Opens water-box.*]

ALLISON.

You *do* look tired. Let me give you a nice cup of  
hot tea. It won't take a second.

[*While he is drinking she takes kettle from  
stove and pours it into teapot on tray up L.*]

THE MAN.

[*Throwing dregs of water from dipper out-of-  
doors.*] No, thanks, this'll do for me.

ALLISON.

[*Coming to c. table with tea-tray.*] It's all ready  
and I've some delicious fresh bread, baked this  
morning.

THE MAN.

Fresh bakin'! Gosh, I do feel kinder holler.

ALLISON.

[*Pulling up chair.*] Sit down. It isn't late. I  
was just going to have tea myself.

ALLISON MAKES HAY

THE MAN.

[*Looking at her with seeing eyes for the first time.*] Wuz you? Ain't seen you before, By crickets, be you one o' them two crazy cissies I heard tell on?

ALLISON.

[*Laughing as she cuts bread.*] I may have been once, but I'm a country girl now—and "smart."

THE MAN.

I don't doubt it. Nuthin' the matter wi' your bread and butter.

ALLISON.

Oh, yes, there is. It needs some of this jam  
[*She helps him copiously from the jar, then pours tea for herself.*]

THE MAN.

[*After a moment in which he has been eating voraciously.*] Gosh, I wuz hungry! Come to think of it, I haven't had a morsel but cold apple pie eleven o'clock. I'll trouble you for some more of that sweet. Tastes good to me. What is it?

ALLISON.

[*Helping him.*] That's quince jam. We have it up here and lots of other things too. We call it Liberty Loan Brand because we buy Liberty Bonds with the proceeds. See?

[*She shows him the label on the can.*]

THE MAN.

[*Reading.*] Well, now, that's a right cute name. Ought to be a good seller, ain't it?



ALLISON.

It is when it gets started. But we're new and it's hard to break in—it takes business men with imagination—like you—to appreciate it——

[*She fills his cup.*]

THE MAN.

[*His mouth full.*] I'm not surprised. What else do you make?

ALLISON.

[*Getting a couple more cartons.*] Well, we've some delicious mint jelly and rose geranium we're very proud of. Won't you try them, Mr. er—I don't know your name.

THE MAN.

[*Sampling everything.*] My name's Pete—Pete Cobb.

ALLISON.

No! Really? I've an awfully good friend called Peter. Do you know you remind me of him.

[*PETER would be pleased.*]

PETE COBB.

Do I? Well, I reckon that means we're going to be friends too. I certainly am obliged to you—I'd no idea how hungry I was, Miss er——

ALLISON.

Marbrook—Allison Marbrook.

PETE COBB.

[*Finishing up samples.*] I say, Miss Marbrook, would you like me to take a line of your things to

ALLISON MAKES HAY

Perkins—on commission? We've a pre-class trade, you know.

ALLISON.

Oh, Mr. Cobb! I should love it! I've samples all packed we were going to Lenox —

PETE COBB.

Lenox! Bosh! Lenox don't do half what we do. If your stuff goes well at Perkins have all you can do to keep us supplied. in whenever I happen to be in these parts you how they're gettin' on.

ALLISON.

[*Going to door with him.*] Oh, that is you. The box is in the cellar. I hope it is too heavy.

PETE COBB.

[*Going out with her.*] Heavy! I kin barrel o' apples on one arm. Now as fer the we pays a small amount down an' gits a cent —

[*They go off. After a moment the sound of a heavy motor getting started is heard. Then ALLISON returns, puts tea-cup on shelf by sink, goes to desk, sits down before her letter and begins to write. JEAN enters from wood-shed, carrying some blades in one hand and a cover of milk in the other.*]

ALLISON.

Oh . . . Jean.

[JEAN crosses, puts milk can on table up L. and takes down dipper.]

JEAN.

Mademoiselle Margot has jus' taken ze men down. They hav' work well. Ze grain is good, Mademoiselle. It will bring ze price. [He drinks.]

ALLISON.

Oh, I'm so glad and I've just sold a case of samples to Perkins' man. That's a splendid opening. I guess we'll come out all right now about the money we owe Stephen.

JEAN.

I congratulate you, Mademoiselle. It is a great deal to do what one sets out to do. But you don' seem overjoyed.

ALLISON.

[Dully.] Oh, I am, I am. Of course we couldn't have done anything without you, Jean. . . . I beg your pardon, but your cable—was it about your leave?

JEAN.

Yes, Mademoiselle.

ALLISON.

Will you have to go back, Jean?

JEAN.

Yes, Mademoiselle. It is about zat I would talk. But you are busy.

ALLISON.

Oh, I was just writing a letter —

ALLISON MAKES HAY

JEAN.

[*Approaching her.*] Finish, Mademoiselle business? Can I be of any assistance?

ALLISON.

No, it's not business. It's just to Mr.

JEAN.

[*Going back.*] Oh, your fiancé—pardon, mademoiselle!

[*He gets cloth from near sink and to wipe off blades, studying A back with a puzzled, worried ex*

ALLISON.

[*After some hesitation, writes one m tence.*] There doesn't seem much to say, perhaps you can be of help, Jean. You've been at camp. What sort of things do men most often hear about at camp—from a farm, you know. I think I've written all the news, but it sounds

JEAN.

[*Seriously, but suppressing a smile.*] I think. I haven't ever received a letter from you, but I should imagine there would be a great deal that a farm could say. If Mademoiselle would care to read me what she has already written, perhaps I could suggest—

ALLISON.

All right. [*She reads.*] "My dear Roy, I write before because there wasn't anything else to tell you. Everything is going well at the

We harvested the rye last week, or rather Jean did, with Margot and me looking on. To-day he and the men are threshing it in the barn. Harvesting is very picturesque work. Margot and I have been very busy over our jellies. I hope you liked the samples I sent. Dorothea is coming home this October. Isn't that splendid? Stephen has been ordered to Chillicothe to teach. You will be glad to hear that Jean has just said our rye came out in fine condition." There! that's all so far!

JEAN.

[*Thoughtfully.*] Well, I mus' admit, Mademoiselle, if I wuz at camp it is not exactly ze sort of letter I should care to receive from ze young lady to whom I had ze honor to be betrothed.

ALLISON.

[*Hastily.*] Oh, Roy just likes *newsy* letters, you know.

JEAN.

So do we all, Mademoiselle, but zere is news an' news! Speaking for myself, if I were in Mr. Parcher's position, ze news of ze rye would not interest me quite so much az ze news of —

[*He hesitates.*]

ALLISON.

Of what?

JEAN.

[*Putting down tools.*] Of yourself, Mademoiselle. Of what you are doing, and tinkering and feeling.

## ALLISON MAKES HAY

ALLISON.

But I did write him what I was doing—th  
you know—and as for the rest—I—oh,  
*could* put that sort of thing in a letter.  
know how.

JEAN.

[*Coming towards her.*] Perhaps, zen,  
help you, Mademoiselle.

ALLISON.

You?

JEAN.

[*Sitting on corner of big table near her.*  
know ze people of my nation are noted f  
ability to express ze feelings. It is not zat  
make a study of it, Mademoiselle. It is za  
we feel, it is natural for us to speak. We  
proud, so happy! Not like ze English wh  
always a little ashame—— Now, were I  
position, Mademoiselle, it would be so simp  
me to write ze letter to my betrothed. [*He  
behind her.*] I should say jus' [*softly*],  
*tres cher*,"—it goes easier in ze French I ad  
if we mus' use ze English, well—" My ver  
You will write it, Mademoiselle? [ALLISO  
*low over the desk, picks up her pen and make  
tempt to write, which soon comes to an end.*  
*voice becomes tense with emotion as he go*  
"My ver' dear, zere is nossing to tell you ex  
I love you, an' zat I know you love me. Ever  
grows bigger, our love, an' richer. It is ze  
harvest we reap from ze little farm. I cann  
to tink of your going away across ze water s  
but if you mus' go"—shall I go on, Mademo

ALLISON.

[*Very low; her face hidden.*] Go on.

JEAN.

[*Very close behind her.*] "If you mus' go, let us at least be made one before ze world, as we are now in spirit. You have not ask me in so many words to be your wife, but I know it is ze dearest wish of your heart. And what is your wish mus' be my wish also. For are you not my beloved?" [*There is a moment's pause.*] Zat is all, Mademoiselle, excep' to finish wiz —

[*His arms are about her, his face very close to hers. ALLISON lifts her face, smiling through tears.*]

ALLISON.

With what?

JEAN.

Wiz zis! [*He kisses her upon the lips. She yields. He lifts her in his arms and kisses her again and again, passionately.*] Ma belle—ma mie—mon amour!

ALLISON.

Jean—Jean! [*She withdraws from him, holding his hands in hers. They stand looking at each other with parted lips and the dawning of new worlds in their eyes. There is a knock at the door. They separate. ALLISON, softly.*] Come in. [*Enter ROY PARCHER.*] Roy!

ROY.

Hello! Are you surprised to see me, Allison? [*Looking at JEAN.*] Oh, who?

ALLISON MAKES HAY

ALLISON.

Roy—this is Jean Duval. He —

ROY.

Oh, I know—your Frenchman. [*He nods.*]  
I want to see you alone, Allison.

JEAN.

[*Stepping forward.*] Mademoiselle, if you  
permit—I —

ALLISON.

No, no, Jean, please. I want to speak to  
Parcher too. Do you mind leaving us? —  
Jean!

JEAN.

As you say, Mademoiselle. Au revoir, —  
sieur.

[*He bows punctiliously to Roy, who  
examining the milk pail with a certain  
curiosity, and goes out.*]

ROY.

Lots of formality, isn't there? I suppose  
the French of it. You haven't asked me what  
I'm doing here?

ALLISON.

I'm waiting. Sit down, Roy.

ROY.

Well, Mrs. Bradley asked me up.

ALLISON.

Mrs. Bradley. Oh [*with meaning for her*]  
I see. How awfully nice!



Roy.

I suppose she knew you didn't have room. Being at Upton, it's not so hard to get here now.

ALLISON.

That's true. Why were you transferred, Roy?

Roy.

Reckon it means we're ready to go over. The Upton men are going out pretty fast now. That's what I wanted to talk to you about, Allison.

ALLISON.

What do you mean, Roy?

Roy.

Well, getting into Upton brings a feller up pretty short, you know—an' makes him think an' ——

ALLISON.

Yes?

Roy.

Oh, Al, I hate to be brutal about it, but this war business is a mighty serious thing, and I feel I ought to be frank with you at all costs, and—well, the fact is, I found I wasn't thinkin' as much about you, Al, as I—er—ought to be thinking, under the circumstances.

ALLISON.

[*Softly.*] Who were you thinking about, Roy—your mother? Or Janey?

Roy.

[*Wondering.*] Allison—how did you—know?

ALLISON.

I guessed. Have you said anything to Janey?

ROY.

[*Indignant.*] Said anything? Wasn't I engaged to you? Do you think I'd make love to another girl any more than you'd let another man propose to you?

ALLISON.

No, no! Of course not! . . . Well, the only thing for us to do is to break our engagement at once. You go and find Janey right off. She only left here a few minutes ago. Tell her you're free and —

[*She has seized Roy by the arm and is pushing him towards the door.*]

ROY.

Well, you needn't be in such an awful hurry about it, Allison.

ALLISON.

I'm not in a hurry, but I'd like to see things settled one way or another.

ROY.

[*Trying to lift the scene to its proper level.*] It's mighty plucky of you to take it like this, Al. I know what it's costing you.

ALLISON.

Oh, you mustn't worry about me, Roy.

ROY.

But I *am* worrying. Makes me feel like a cad, rather. I asked you, Al, and if you don't want to

release me, I guess I'm enough of an officer and a gentleman to do the decent thing.

ALLISON.

[*Aghast at the possibility.*] You mean—marry me anyway! Roy, you certainly are the stuff heroes are made of. But I wouldn't have that for worlds. Don't you see that I'm glad you've found the right girl at last—really glad? There's nothing else like it, is there, Roy?

ROY.

Nothing! I say, how do you know?

ALLISON.

[*Quickly.*] Now, you go and find Janey. She left here just a few minutes ago. Tell her I give you up to her freely. Tell her I won't marry you if I have to remain an old maid for the rest of my life. Tell her——

[*The door bursts open and MARGOT enters followed by JANEY, PETER and TRUESDALE.*]

MARGOT.

Hello! Here's the whole bunch! Who's going to be an old maid?

ALLISON.

Hello, Dr. Truesdale. Hello, Peter dear. Well, I've something to tell you all. Roy and I have broken our engagement.

PETER.

[*Calmly.*] Really?

JANEY.

You have! Why?

ALLISON.

I guess it was only a practice flight, Janey. Roy's ready for the real thing now.

[Enter JEAN from the wood-shed, unnoticed.]

MARGOT.

Good for you, Al! Nothing like the economic independence of women!

ROY.

Reckon there's not much danger of Allison remaining an old maid!

ALLISON.

I certainly don't *want* to.

JEAN.

[*Coming forward.*] Mademoiselle, can I be of service? If you will accept ze hand of a poor soldier —

JANEY.

Good gracious!

ALLISON.

Oh, Jean, how chivalrous of you!

[*She takes his hand.*]

ROY.

Allison! You accept?

ALLISON.

Out of *pique*, Roy!

ROY.

What do you know of this fellow?

ALLISON.

We've worked together for three months on a farm. That's a pretty good test.

MARGOT.

You bet it is! Jean's Class A, all right.

ROY.

Are you all joking? Are you really going to let Allison marry this chap, Mr. Weston?

PETER.

Well, Roy, when Allison engaged him I took pains to look up his references [*exchanging smiles with TRUESDALE*], and I found them *exceptionally* satisfactory. Now that she's engaged to him, I don't feel that I need to go into it all over again.

JEAN.

[*His arm around ALLISON.*] All over ze world, Monsieur, ze laboring class is coming into its own. Mademoiselle could not stand in ze way of progress.

[*They all gather around JEAN and ALLISON in congratulation as.*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

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Fourteen male characters, sixteen or seventeen years old. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays an hour and three-quarters. An ingenious and interesting story of football politics, into the plot of which the "movies" enter as a detective agency. Fred Williamson's unexpected talents as a photo-play comedian get him into all kinds of trouble. Full of the true college atmosphere, lively, bright and a sure hit. Strongly recommended.

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A Farce in One Act

By May E. Countryman

One male, two females. Costumes, modern; scenery, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. Hiram Jones, an incurable maker of bets, inveigles two ladies into making wagers with him in regard to the loan of a patent egg-beater; he thinks that he has a safe thing on both, but discovering his plot, the ladies get together and so arrange matters that he loses both bets. Very lively, bright and funny and a sure thing with an audience.

Price, 15 cents

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A Rural Comedy Drama in Three Acts by Gordan V. May. **Seven males, five females.** Costumes, modern; scenery, one interior, one exterior. Plays two hours. An easy and entertaining play with a well-balanced cast of characters. The story is strong and sympathetic and the comedy element varied and amusing. Barnaby Strutt is a great part for a good comedian; "Junior" a close second. Strongly recommended.

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A Comedy Drama in Five Acts by Arthur Lewis Tubbs. **Eight males five females.** Costumes, modern; scenery not difficult. Plays a full evening. A very sympathetic piece, of powerful dramatic interest; strong and varied comedy relieves the serious plot. Ralph Underwood, the minister, is a great part, and Roxy a strong soubrette; all parts are good and full of opportunity. Clean, bright and strongly recommended.

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## THE COLONEL'S MAID

A Comedy in Three Acts by C. Leona Dalrymple. **Six males, three females.** Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays a full evening. An exceptionally bright and amusing comedy, full of action; all the parts good. Capital Chinese low comedy part; two first-class old men. This is a very exceptional piece and can be strongly recommended.

*Price, 25 cents.*

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A Comedy in Three Acts by C. W. Miles. **Eleven males, ten females.** Scenery, two interiors; costumes, modern. Plays an hour and a half. A lively college farce, full of the true college spirit. Its cast is large, but many of the parts are small and incidental. Introduces a good deal of singing, which will serve to lengthen the performance. Recommended highly for co-educational colleges.

*Price, 15 cents*

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A Farce in Three Acts by Anthony E. Wills. **Seven males, four females.** Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours and a half. A bustling, up-to-date farce, full of movement and action; all the parts good and effective; easy to produce; just the thing for an experienced amateur club and hard to spoil, even in the hands of less practical players. Free for amateur performance.

*Price, 25 cents*

## THE SISTERHOOD OF BRIDGET

A Farce in Three Acts by Robert Elwin Ford. **Seven males, six females.** Costumes, modern; scenery, easy interiors. Plays two hours. An easy, effective and very humorous piece turning upon the always interesting servant girl question. A very unusual number of comedy parts; all the parts good. Easy to get up and well recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

# THE BEWILDERING MISS FELICIA

A Comedy in Three Acts

By Granville Forbes Sturgis

(Written expressly for and presented by The Drama Club of  
the Denver Grade Teachers' Association, Colorado.)

Fourteen females. Scenery, one interior and one exterior; costumes, period of 1830, but may be modern, if desired. Miss Felicia comes to the sleepy town of Lilac and occupies her grandfather's mansion. By her radiant personality she transforms the characters of all the old maids of the village, making them drop all their petty shams and jealousies. French dialect, negro and country girl comedy characters; all the parts first-class. A strong piece and not difficult. Plays two and a quarter hours.

Price, 25 cents

## CHARACTERS

FELICIA FREEMAN, *the newcomer.*

MISS ADELINE PAISLEY, *an old maid.*

MRS. CAPTAIN HIPPOLYTUS BIDDLE.

MRS. FREDERICK ADDISON, *divorced.*

MRS. ROBERT DOUGLAS, *honeymooning alone.*

MRS. MARCIA MURRAY, *a widow.*

NORMA MURRAY, *her daughter.*

MISS MEHITABLE OGGSBY, *a landlady.*

HANNAH JANE, *a drudge for Miss Oggsby.*

MISS LUCRETIA LONG, *inclined to be frivolous.*

MRS. JOHN JOSE, *who sells butter and eggs.*

SALLY JOHNSON, *a laundress.*

FREEDOM, *colored, but free.*

MAMSELLE, *maid to Felicia.*

## SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The vacant house. Exterior.—Late afternoon.

ACT II.—Miss Felicia's. Interior.—One year later.

ACT III.—Miss Felicia says "Good-bye." Exterior.—Six weeks later, afternoon.

## THREE OF A KIND

A Comedy Sketch in One Act

By Gladys Ruth Bridgham

One male, six female characters. Scene, a simple interior; costumes, modern. Written expressly for the author's High School pupils from fourteen to seventeen years of age; one adult and one child of seven. Miss Carrington, the new governess, is expected to arrive, and it occurs to both Bob and Eloise to disguise themselves like her and have a little fun. Their mix up with the real Miss C. is very funny. Easy, rapid and laughable; a sure hit and can be recommended. Plays twenty-five minutes.

Price, 15 cents



# A COUPLE OF MILLION

An American Comedy in Four Acts

By *Walter Ben Hare*

Author of "Professor Pepp," "Much Ado About Betty,"  
"The Hoodoo," "The Dutch Detective," etc.

Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors and an exterior. Plays a full evening. Royalty, ten dollars (\$10.00) for each performance. A more ambitious play by this popular author in the same successful vein as his previous offerings. Bemis Bennington is left two million dollars by his uncle on condition that he shall live for one year in a town of less than five thousand inhabitants and during that period marry and earn without other assistance than his own industry and ability the sum of five thousand dollars. Failing to accomplish this the money goes to one Professor Noah Jabb. This is done despite the energetic opposition of Jabb, who puts up a very interesting fight. A capital play that can be strongly recommended. Plenty of good comedy and a great variety of good parts, full of opportunity.

*Price, 25 cents*

## CHARACTERS

BEMIS BENNINGTON.

HON. JEREMY WISE.

JAMES PATRICK BURNS, "*Stubby*."

PROFESSOR NOAH JABB.

BEVERLY LOMAN.

SQUIRE PIPER.

FAY FAIRBANKS.

MRS. CLARICE COURTENAY.

GENEVIEVE MCGULLY.

SAMMIE BELL PORTER.

PINK.

*Several Hill-Billies.*

## SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The law office of Hon. Jeremy Wise, New York City. A morning in July.

ACT II.—The exterior of the court-house, Opaloopa, Alabama. An afternoon in October.

ACT III.—Same as Act II. The next afternoon.

ACT IV.—Mrs. Courtenay's sitting-room, Opaloopa, Alabama. A night in April.

## ISOSCELES

A Play in One Act

By *Walter Ben Hare*

Two male, one female characters. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. Royalty \$2.50 for each performance. An admirable little travesty of the conventional emotional recipe calling for husband, wife and lover. Played in the proper spirit of burlesque it is howlingly funny. Strongly recommended for the semi-professional uses of schools of acting. A capital bit for a benefit or exhibition programme, offering a decided novelty.

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# A House of Cards

A Play in One Act

By  
PERCIVAL WILDE

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# A House of Cards

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## CHARACTERS

HE.

SHE.



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# A House of Cards

The following casts are noteworthy :

Produced by Neighborhood Players of Newark, N. J.,  
Theatre Club, N. Y., October 27, 1916, and at New  
November 1, 2, 4, 1916.

HE - - - - - Andrew Leitheu  
SHE - - - - - Pearl Holtzha

Under the direction of George J. Brenn, Jr.

Produced by Community Players, Richmond Hill, L.  
at Community Players Workshop, November 9, 10, 1916

HE - - - - - Jack Shat  
SHE - - - - - Grace Ly

Under the direction of Arthur Pollock.

Stage setting by G. B. Ashworth and Ruth Hambic

Produced at Keith's Theatre, Mount Vernon, N. Y.  
Martin Beck, beginning December 27, 1916; and on  
Orpheum Circuit, and at Palace Theatre, N. Y., week  
July 23, 1917.

HE - - - - - Louis Leon Ha  
SHE - - - - - Dorothy Shoemak

Under the direction of the author.

Stage setting by Livingston Platt.

Produced by The Little Theatre, of Erie, Pa., during t  
of 1916.

HE - - - - - Adriel W. El  
SHE - - - - - Sylvia Russe

Under the direction of Henry Bethuel Vincent.

Produced at Prince Street Theatre, Rochester, N. Y.,  
Street Players, March 27, 28, 1917.

HE - - - - - Herbert Ster  
SHE - - - - - Mrs. E. Franklin Brewster

Under the direction of Miss Anne Wynn O'Ryan.

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## A HOUSE OF CARDS

**A**N exquisitely furnished room in a fashionable New York apartment house. The walls are hung with tapestries; the furniture, of the period of Louis XIV, though in the best of good taste, is almost oppressively heavy; soft rugs cover the floor. In the center of the room is an extremely simple, yet very massive electrolier.

The room is entered by various doors: one of them, at the rear, leads into a private hall; another, at the right, evidently opens into a room, but the interior of the room is never visible, as the door conceals it from the audience even when open.

The curtain rises. There is no illumination on the stage proper, but the door at the right is open, and a broad beam of light comes through it. Some person is moving about in the next room, and the shadow of a figure is occasionally visible. A clock, somewhere in the distance, strikes midnight in deep tones. Then voices are heard outside at the rear. The unseen figure in the next room moves to the threshold, stands motionless an instant, and as the click of a latchkey is heard, pulls the door shut. The rear door opens, and a man and a woman are seen. The man enters the room boldly; the woman does not advance.



HE

Just wait till I find the switch, dear.

SHE

*(Waiting and listening)*

You must have passed it.

HE

No. I've got it. *(The electrolier lights, and the woman enters the room. She is not over twenty-five, tall, blond, and insistently beautiful. She is in evening dress, and her heavy fur cloak, open in front, reveals a décolleté gown. She wears no hat. The man, also in evening dress, is some ten years her senior. His face is not prepossessing, but it conveys an impression of strength, strength mental as well as physical. He moves toward her.)* Let me help you with your cloak.

SHE

*(Allowing him to assist her)*

Thank you, dear. *(He spreads the cloak over a chair, and proceeds to divest himself of his own overcoat and muffler.)* Quite exemplary. *(Leisurely peeling off her gloves, and glancing at a wrist-watch.)* Just midnight. My watch is fast. *(She sets it.)*

HE

*(Turning)*

By Jove!

SHE

Yes?

HE

Don't move: stand as you were. With your hands in front of you. No. Yes, that's it! (*He pauses.*) Whew!

SHE

What's the matter?

HE

There's nothing the matter, Helen, absolutely nothing! You are simply exquisite! Perfect!

SHE

*(Smiling)*

Am I?

HE

That gown—and your hair—how that plume sets it off! From your head to your feet, a dream! A dream, Helen!

SHE

*(Dropping the pose)*

Silly boy! (*Crossing to him.*) Do you love me? (*He tries to seize her. She eludes him.*) Say it nicely!

HE

*(Following her)*

I love you!

SHE

*(Backing away)*

Again! . . . *(She bumps into a sofa.)* Oh!  
*(She throws out her hands to balance herself. He catches her; kisses her.)*

HE

*(After a pause)*

Isn't it time to go to bed?

SHE

At midnight? No, it's too early. Besides, I feel like talking.

HE

*(Sinking into a chair)*

I'm tired.

SHE

I'm not.

HE

You haven't put in a hard day at the office, Helen.

SHE

*(With instant sympathy)*

Poor dear! *(Sitting on the arm of his chair, and caressing him.)* Was it really so hard?

HE

Yes. . . . You know, I'm an *almost* successful business man. If I had more, I could retire: if I had less, I'd be a failure.—

SHE

*(Interrupting)*

No, Arthur!

HE

*(Continuing)*

Oh, I'll never be down and out: I've too much sense for that: but I'll never be able to quit.

SHE

*(Kissing his forehead)*

I think of you all day long, Arthur.

HE

I know it. But it's work—nothing but work—damned, dull, beastly, monotonous work.

*(The door at right opens slowly and gradually. The light in the next room has been extinguished.)*

SHE

I thought you loved it.

HE

So did I. I used to think that—once. To-morrow will be another hard day.

SHE

*(Reproachfully)*

Arthur!

HE

Eh?

SHE

Don't you remember?

HE

Remember?

SHE

To-morrow will be Tommy's birthday!

HE

I forgot all about it. The little rascal!

SHE

He will be two years old to-morrow. Just think of that!

HE

Well, well! *(Suddenly)* I say, he looks like me, doesn't he?

SHE

*(Leaning away from him)*

Let me look at you.

BORDEN.

It is a rather unusual cognomen.

BUB.

What say?

BORDEN.

I merely ventured the assertion that Billy as a surname was a somewhat extraordinary appellation.  
[*Resumes his reading.*]

BUB.

Yeah, 'tis so. Them's the very words I remarked to Mr. Slimmens at the telygraph office. [*Slight pause.*] He had to look 'em up in the dictionary.

NANCY.

Maybe it's for some one down in the village.

BUB.

Nup. I seen all the Billies in Skeehawken and they couldn't make head ner tail of the code message. [*Lowers voice mysteriously.*] Mebbe it's a alias. [*Slight pause.*] That means a false name that a crook uses when he wants to be real extry crooked, like Mike the Boozer, er sump'm. Them's the very worstest ones that uses aliases. [*Rises.*] You don't suppose that woman who robbed the bank at Watertown was born under the name of Getaway Bell, do you? [*Slight pause.*] Nup, that's her alias, and I'm here to bet a big round doughnut that Mr. Billy is jest as much a alias as Getaway Bell. You ain't seen no one round here that looks like a crook, have you?

HE

*(Looking about)*

I thought I heard something.

SHE

What do you mean?

HE

I would swear to it—I heard a sound.

SHE

*(Laughing)*

Look! *(She indicates his cigarette case, which has fallen to the floor.)* You dropped your case. *(As he picks it up):* 'Fraid cat! You've been reading about burglars!

HE

*(Smiling)*

Which of us would be more frightened if we saw one?

SHE

Oh, you don't think there's one here?

HE

*(Laughing)*

Of course not. *(He lights a cigarette.)* He couldn't get past the elevator man.

---

SHE

I'm so glad.

HE

(*Changing the conversation*)

What do you hear from Jimmy?

SHE

Which Jimmy?

HE

Not your brother—Jimmy Duncan, I mean.

SHE

Oh, he's in Chicago.

HE

Coming back this week?

SHE

I don't think so. He's not sure himself.

HE

He writes to you often, doesn't he?

SHE

Yes, quite often. . . . (*She pauses.*) Do you remember, dear, four years ago?



HE

*(Puzzled)*

Four years ago?

SHE

In January?

HE

*(Smiling)*

Ah, yes!

SHE

Both of you were attentive to me. If you took me to theater one night, Jimmy took me the next. If you sent me roses, Jimmy sent me orchids. You used to hate each other!

HE

*(Laughing)*

Funny, wasn't it?

SHE

You didn't think so then. I was afraid, one night—it was at some ridiculous dance——

HE

*(Interrupting)*

Oh, that was nothing.

SHE

I'm not so sure. . . . I was afraid that you and Jimmy would come to blows. I was glad you didn't.

HE

*(With a comic swagger)*

I could have whipped him!

SHE

*(Shaking her head)*

I don't know——

HE

Why, I'm twice as strong as Jimmy—always was.

SHE

It isn't only strength, Arthur.

HE

No? Then it's nerve: Jimmy has no nerve.

SHE

*(With a sudden change of tone)*

You know, I liked him for that!

HE

*Liked* him for that?

SHE

Yes.

HE

For being a coward?

SHE

If you want to put it that way, yes. There was something sweet about him. Something gentle, womanly. Not effeminate—Jimmy was never that, but something delicate, something—well, something which I found in very few other men.

HE

*(With ill-concealed contempt)*

I imagine so.

SHE

Laugh at it if you will. . . . *(She pauses.)* I can't find just the words to express it. Jimmy was the kind of a man who didn't make scenes—not even if he was right. He'd rather give in. I've seen him do it a thousand times, and sometimes—sometimes it hurt me. I felt *he* was not the coward—I, I was the coward. It was so easy to take advantage of him.

HE

*(After a pause)*

Yes.

*(He throws away his cigarette.)*

SHE

*(In a tone of reverie)*

Did I ever tell you—Jimmy and you proposed to me the same week?

HE

*(Interested)*

No, I didn't know that.

*(There is the slightest possible movement of the door, and one notices that it is not closed but ajar: perhaps has been ajar for some time.)*

SHE

I thought I had told you: Jimmy asked me on a Monday, and you on a Wednesday.

HE

A Wednesday?

SHE

*(Sitting on the sofa)*

The twenty-first, wasn't it?

HE

So it was. . . . *(Standing before her, smiling grimly.)* You kept me waiting a week before you put me out of my agony.

SHE

*(Smiling)*

That was mean, wasn't it?

HE

*(Sitting on the floor at her feet)*

Yes, it was!

SHE

I kept Jimmy waiting also——

HE

*(Interrupting relentlessly)*

That was no consolation.

SHE

Poor boy! *(Putting her arm about his neck.)* But you've had your reward, haven't you? *(She leans over and kisses him.)* It wasn't easy to make up my mind—I had a hard time that week.

HE

Thank you!

*(At this point one observes that the door is now wide open. The characters have their backs to it, and neither of them notice it.)*

SHE

You were a much cleverer man than Jimmy: I had always looked up to you. *(He grunts, but makes no other answer.)* I often wondered what there was in me to make both of you like me: you were so different.

HE

Yes, we were different,

## A HOUSE OF CARDS

SHE

And Jimmy was such a nice boy.

HE

I was a clever man with no money, and fool with lots of it.

SHE

I thought of that also. I didn't love him used to say that love would come in time love which came last was the best of all.

HE

(*Chuckling*)

It sounds nice, doesn't it?

SHE

He used to din it into my ears: over and over

HE

I wonder if he still thinks so?

SHE

I wonder? (*She pauses.*) And you——

HE

Tell me, was cleverness my only attraction?

SHE

No. (*She looks at him whimsically.*) You were fickle: that was charming—and risky. I knew I would never be sure of you.

HE

I have never been sure of myself.

SHE

I believe you. (*She smiles.*) I never knew how many girls you loved before you met me—and I don't know how many you've loved since.

HE

(*Laughing*)

Helen, that's not fair!

SHE

(*Also laughing*)

But it is! Come, 'fess up!

HE

No, no!

SHE

(*Enjoying the situation*)

Oh, but you *must* answer! I insist!

HE

No!

SHE

You know all about me: I don't know anything about you. Answer: whom have you loved *since* you met me?

*(She rises with burlesque gestures. The door swings through its arc with a loud squeak: the latch catches, the door refuses to close. Once, twice, the unseen hand partly opens and attempts to close it: then, with a harsh slam, the door is shut, and the bolt of the lock clicks home.)*

HE

*(Who has risen at the sound of the squeak)*

Good God! *(Pushes her towards the telephone.)*  
Helen! Quick! Call the police! *(He rushes to the door.)* Who's there? Answer me! Who's there?

*(The report of a revolver rings out in the next room.)*

HE

*(Snarling with rage)*

Ah!

*(He tries to burst the door open with his shoulder.)*

SHE

*(At the telephone, hysterical)*

Help! Help! Police! Help!

*(The lock of the door gives way, and HE disappears into the next room.)*



SHE

*(Still at the telephone; shrieking to him and to the instrument alternately)*

Arthur! Don't go in! Help! Help! Arthur!  
Arthur! Where are you? Arthur!

HE

*(Appearing in the doorway, ashen, unnerved,  
trembling)*

Helen!

SHE

*(Staggering towards him)*

What is it? What is it?

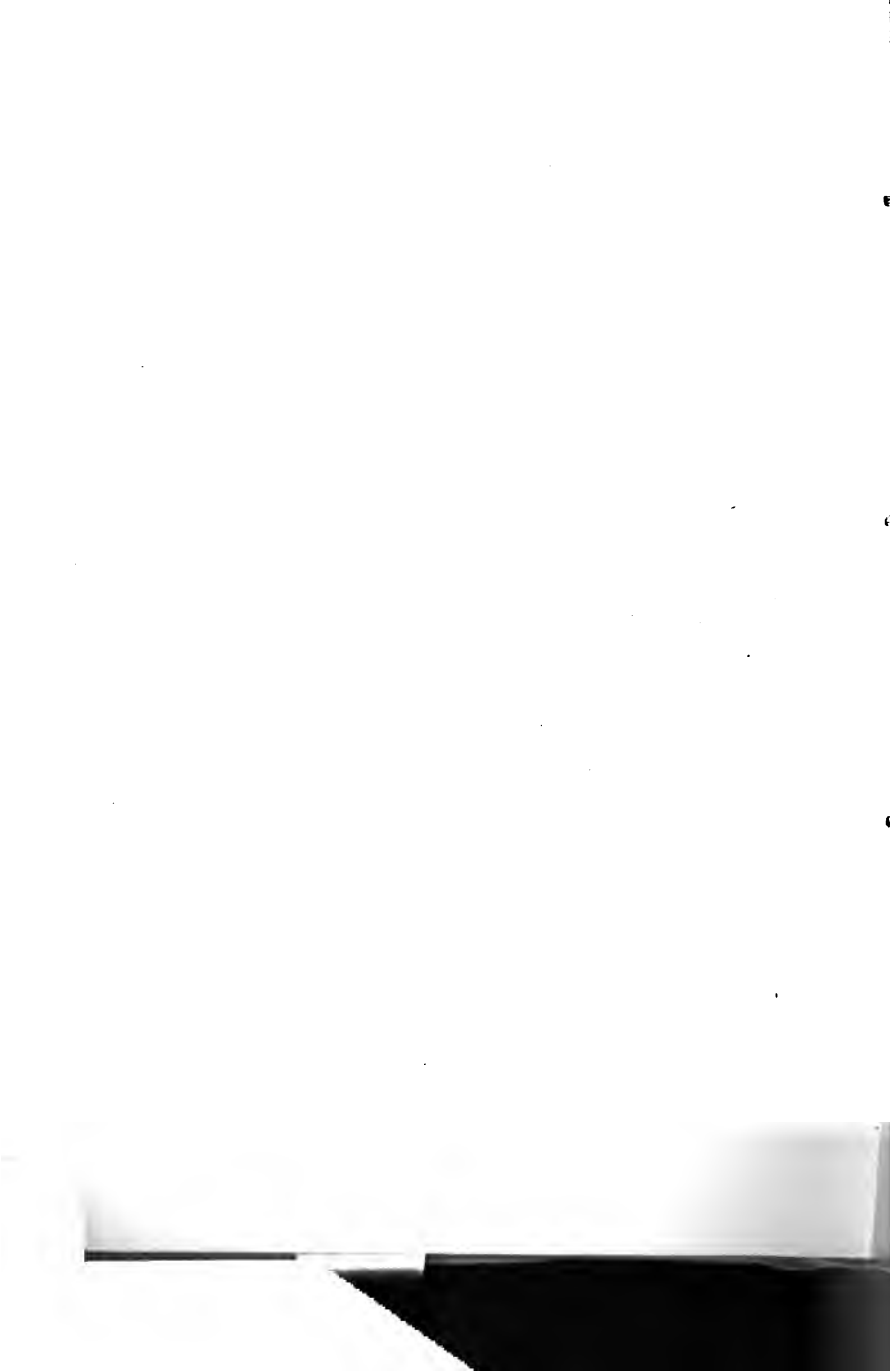
HE

*(Sobbing with terror)*

Helen! Be brave! Be brave! *(He grasps her by the shoulders.)* Jimmy—your husband—overheard. He killed himself!

THE CURTAIN FALLS





MRS. GRAY.

Crying?

MISS MATCH.

Yes, not hollering out loud, or anything like that, but just low subdued sobs like she didn't want any one to hear her. I'm so temperamental anyway, it almost gave me the hysterics the way she took on. Once I thought I'd call you. What do you suppose is the matter with her?

MRS. GRAY.

She's probably a little homesick, that's all. She's been visiting her people at Watertown.

MISS MATCH.

Homesick? Don't you believe it. [*Shakes forefinger impressively.*] There is only one thing on earth can make a girl carry on like she did. Only one thing. [*Short impressive pause.*] A man.

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, I guess you're mistaken. I've known Miss Blake nearly a year over in France and here in New York and I never heard her mention a man. No, she's not interested in men and men ain't interested in her.

MISS MATCH.

Men ain't interested in her? That explains the whole thing. No wonder she was crying. I know just how she felt, the poor thing. Has she met Mr. Borden?

MRS. GRAY.

No, she hasn't seen him yet.

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WALTER BEN HARE

AND BILLY  
DISAPPEARED



A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

WALTER H. BAKER & Co., BOSTON



MRS. GRAY.

Who's Bub Dusenberry?

BUB.

Me. [*Takes book.*] Twenty-five cents charges.

MRS. GRAY.

All right. [*Hands him a quarter.*

BUB.

Say, Mis' Gray——

MRS. GRAY.

Well?

BUB.

You ain't got no opening up here at the Inn fer a good live boy to git a job, have you?

MRS. GRAY.

What kind of a job?

BUB.

Wall, I'd ruther be a detective than anything else, but I don't cal'late you need a detective. I'd be a awful handy bell-boy, er a night clerk, and I kin make the beds, split wood, carry coal, peel potatoes, cut hair, tend the furnace, wash the winders, mind babies fer folks, play the talkin' machine and tend bar!

MRS. GRAY.

Where are you working now?

BUB.

No place reg'lar. I ain't got a stiddy job just now. I carry messages fer the telygraph office and





# And Billy Disappeared

## A Clean Comedy of Mystery In Four Acts

By

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BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1920

# And Billy Disappeared

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## CHARACTERS

HON. R. M. BORDEN	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the attorney</i>
ISHMAEL	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the hermit</i>
MR. BILLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the aviator</i>
BUB DUSENBERRY	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the boy</i>
GENE GREENER	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the salesman</i>
MARY BLAKE	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the mystery</i>
MISS MATCH	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the spinster</i>
MRS. GRAY	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the wife</i>
NANCY BORDEN	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the débutante</i>
AGGIE BORDEN	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the child</i>
KITTIE	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>the maid</i>

SCENE.—The sun parlor of the Silver Trout Inn in the Adirondack Mountains.

TIME OF PLAYING.—Two and one-fourth hours.

## SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Morning.

ACT II.—The same night.

ACT III.—The next morning.

ACT IV.—A few days later.



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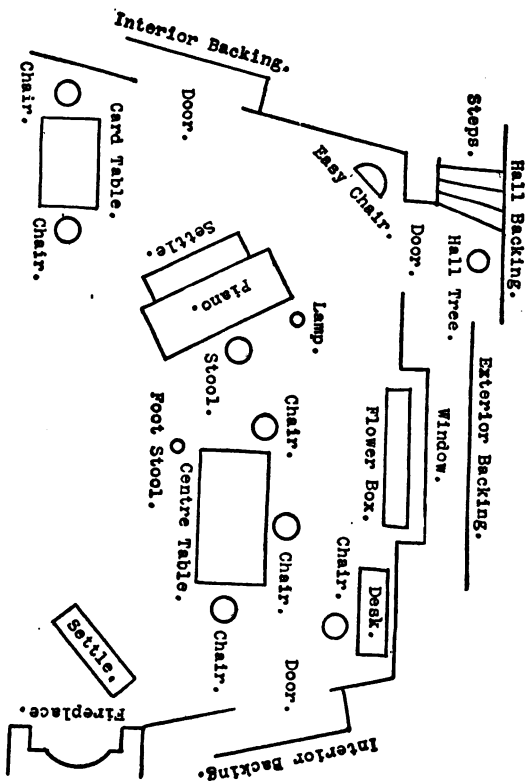
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**FEB 27 1945**

# DIAGRAM OF STAGE SETTING



MARY.

I know you will. It seems that God sent you to me just when I needed you the most. You have been like a dear mother to me—the only one I have ever known—and I *will* try to be my old self again. I can do it. I will! [Stands by center table.

MRS. GRAY.

That's right. That's the way I like to hear my girl talk. Now, forget everything that has worried you and take a fresh start. Let's go in to breakfast.

MARY.

[Has picked up the telegram from the table, reads the name and starts.] Mr. Billy!

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. It came this morning. I'm expecting him some time to-morrow.

MARY.

It's a peculiar name.

MRS. GRAY.

Isn't it? Did you ever hear it before?

MARY.

Yes, I knew a man by that name in France.

MRS. GRAY.

A soldier?

MARY.

I don't think so. There was something very mysterious about him. He never used to wear any uniform, and no one knew his connection with the

army, but he was severely wounded at Château-Thierry. [*Slight pause, then she looks MRS. GRAY steadily in the eyes.*] Sometimes I think he was in the secret service.

MRS. GRAY.

Maybe he was a civilian.

MARY.

He was an American, I'm sure.

MRS. GRAY.

Many American civilians were in the danger zone.

MARY.

But he was in the midst of the battle. I always wondered why he wasn't in uniform. The boys told wonderful tales of his bravery. He led three or four of our privates into a German dugout and captured a machine-gun and five of the enemy. There was a terrible hand-to-hand fight and Mr. Billy was badly wounded. Do you suppose he is here in New York?

MRS. GRAY.

I don't know. My lawyers wrote to me that a Mr. Billy would be here at the Inn for a few days for a business discussion. They recommended him highly, but I rather imagined that he would be an elderly gentleman. Did you like him?

MARY.

Very much. Every one liked him. He was in our hospital nearly three months, then one day he disappeared.

MRS. GRAY.

Disappeared? What for?

MARY.

No one knew. We never learned what had become of him. I thought at the time it was rather strange, but probably he was transferred to some other hospital.

MRS. GRAY.

He must have made quite an impression on [*slight pause, as she looks slyly at MARY*] the nurses.

MARY.

Yes. I remember one night ——

[*Enter GENE GREENER rapidly down the stairs at rear R.*]

GENE.

[*Loud, quick and cheerful.*] Mornin', ladies.

MRS. GRAY.

Good-morning, Mr. Greener. Miss Blake, Mr. Greener. Miss Blake is the housekeeper.

GENE.

Then I've got to apologize to the housekeeper the first thing. I hope I'm not too late for breakfast. You see, Miss Blake, I didn't get in until nearly midnight, came in on the night train, hit the hay right away and didn't wake up till ten minutes ago. I set my alarm clock for seven but it never fazed me. If I can have a cup of coffee I'll promise never to oversleep again.

MRS. GRAY.

Why, certainly. Go right in the dining-room. Miss Match is in there.

GENE.

Miss Match? Parlor or sulphur?

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, parlor, decidedly.

GENE.

I hope she won't flare up when I strike her.

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, no. She's just dying to meet you.

GENE.

Oh, she's one of the dying kind, is she? Well, I'll see you after breakfast. No mail for me, was there?

MRS. GRAY.

No.

GENE.

I didn't look for any, so I'm not disappointed. Now to meet the languishing Miss Match.

[Exit, at L.]

MRS. GRAY.

Mary, you'd better go in and get a cup of coffee.

MARY.

Yes, I will. [Starts to L.] Then I'm going over the whole house and start a regular cleaning campaign before the third-floor rooms are filled.



MRS. GRAY.

That's right. Hard work, they say, drives trouble away. I hope my Mr. Billy turns out to be your hospital hero. He intends to stay a week at least and it would do you good to meet an old friend again.

MARY.

Yes, I'm sure it would, especially a man like Mr. Billy. [Exit, L.]

MRS. GRAY.

[Looks after her and smiles; slight pause.] And I was just like that thirty years ago. Me and John! [Sighs.] I wonder if I'll ever see my John again.

[The noise of a distant aeroplane is heard; this effect may be simulated by the muffled sound of a motor-cycle. Enter NANCY, AGGIE and BORDEN from C. E. from rear L.]

AGGIE.

Oh, Mis' Gray, what do you think?

NANCY.

There's an air-ship flying up the mountain.

MRS. GRAY.

An air-ship? Yes, I thought I heard it.

[All go to window and look out.]

BORDEN.

Can you see him? [Enter MISS MATCH from L.]

MISS MATCH.

[At window.] It sounded like an aeroplane.

NANCY.

Yes, we saw it.

AGGIE.

Oh, I wonder if they're going to drop down a bomb or anything.

MISS MATCH.

[*Suddenly points and exclaims.*] There he is. See him! He's coming here.

MRS. GRAY.

How low he is flying.

BORDEN.

He's trying to make a landing.

MISS MATCH.

Maybe he's looking for me. I have several gentlemen friends in the air service. I'm just crazy to have one of 'em take me up in the air.

NANCY.

He's lighting. Maybe he's out of gas.

AGGIE.

[*Very excited.*] Oh, I want to see him light. I want to see him light.

[*Rushes out C. E. and off up L.*]

BORDEN.

Come, Nancy.

[*Follows AGGIE out.*]

NANCY.

Isn't it exciting?

[*Exit, C. E. to rear L.*]

MRS. GRAY.

[To MISS MATCH.] Don't you want to see him?

MISS MATCH.

Oh, I couldn't bear it. It would make me so nervous, and he might be wounded or something. I can't stand to see any one in danger, it makes me so fainty. I'd better go back and finish my coffee. Tell the air-ship man to stay to breakfast. I'll wait for him in the dining-room.

[Exit, L. Enter BUB from L.

BUB.

Say, that feller is tryin' to light right in the middle of our rhubarb patch. He's certainly got his nerve. You want me to throw him out?

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, no. Go out and see if you can help him. Ask him in to breakfast.

[BUB exits at C. E. to rear L. A shrill scream is heard off L. from MISS MATCH. MRS. GRAY, who has followed BUB to the door, now turns and comes down C. Enter, from L., MISS MATCH, wringing her hands and much agitated.

MISS MATCH.

Oh, oh, what do you think? Oh!

[Feebly sinks in chair down L.

MRS. GRAY.

[Hurries to her.] What is it?

MISS MATCH.

Kitty!

MRS. GRAY.

Kittie? What's happened to Kittie?

MISS MATCH.

She's disappeared.

MRS. GRAY.

[*Startled.*] Disappeared? Kittie?

MISS MATCH.

She's run away.

[*Crosses to R., much agitated, wringing her hands and groaning.*]

MRS. GRAY.

[*Also excited, following her.*] Isn't she in the kitchen?

MISS MATCH.

No, I looked there. She was on Mr. Greener's lap in the dining-room when I came in and she jumped down and ran away.

MRS. GRAY.

On Mr. Greener's lap? Kittie!

MISS MATCH.

He ran after her and kicked her.

MRS. GRAY.

Kicked her?

MISS MATCH.

Right in the pantry, right before my very eyes.  
I never saw such a man.

MRS. GRAY.

I'll see what it's all about.

[Starts toward L. Enter GENE from L.]

MISS MATCH.

There he is. Cruel, heartless man. She's gone  
—you've driven her away. She's lost to me for-  
ever.

GENE.

[At L., savagely.] Then keep her out of the  
dining-room.

MRS. GRAY.

But that's where she belongs.

GENE.

You see, it was this way. She was on my  
lap——

MRS. GRAY.

What was she doing on your lap?

GENE.

Just sitting there.

MISS MATCH.

[At R.] Yes, I came in and saw them.

GENE.

Then she jumped down and I must have stepped  
on her tail.

[Comes to L. C.]

MRS. GRAY.

[*At c.*] On her tail! [*Enter KITTIE from L.; she stands in the doorway.*] Kittie, what were you doing on Mr. Greener's lap?

[*KITTIE looks astonished, blinking her eyes. All hold tableau a moment.*

KITTIE.

[*After pause.*] On his lap? On whose lap?

GENE.

[*To MRS. GRAY.*] No, no, you don't understand.

KITTIE.

I ain't been on nobody's lap. I's a 'spectable cullud membah ob de African-Mefodist Church, I is, and I don't go settin' in no man's lap.

[*Crosses down L.*

GENE.

It was the cat.

MISS MATCH.

[*At r.*] Yes, my poor little kitty.

GENE.

Never mind, I'll buy you another one if she don't come back. [*Enter BUB from c. e., carrying the cat.*

BUB.

Anybody lost a cat?

MISS MATCH.

[*Rushes to him at rear c.*] Oh, you brave, kind, darling boy! [*Kisses BUB, who stands aghast.*] It's my kitty. [*Takes cat.*] Come to muzzer, dol-

ling. Did nassy old man kick you in the pantry?  
Come wiz muzzer.

[Exit, C. E., up stairs and off rear R.

GENE.

Now maybe I can finish my breakfast.

[Starts off L.

MRS. GRAY.

[Following him.] But don't take Kittie in your  
lap any more. [Crosses up C.

GENE.

You bet I won't.

[Exit, L.

KITTIE.

If dat man eber takes *me* in his lap, I'll carve him  
on de head wif a razor, and I'll carve him deep.  
[Waddling to door, L.] I ain't gwine to let *no* man  
fool wif me. No, ma'am. I ain't dat kin' ob a girl.  
[Exit, L.

BUB.

There was two men in that air-ship car. One of  
'em's sick, er sump'm.

MRS. GRAY.

Sick?

[Hurries to C. E.

BUB.

It looks like old Ishmael, who lives up in the  
mountains.

[Exit, C. E. and off rear L., followed by MRS.  
GRAY. After a slight pause, MISS MATCH  
comes down stairs, entering from C. E.  
from up R.

## MISS MATCH.

[*In her giddy old-maid tones.*] Is there any one here? [*She looks around and as soon as she realizes that she is alone a complete change occurs in her deportment,—she is no longer the farcical old maid, but a keen, clever woman. Take plenty of time for the following pantomime, as it is very important. She glances quickly around, crosses to table at c., where MRS. GRAY left the telegram. MISS MATCH quickly takes it up and reads the address.*] Mr. Billy, Silver Trout Inn, Skeehawken, New York. [*She faces front and pauses as if puzzled.*] Hm! [*Glances cautiously around, carefully opens message and reads it hastily. She frowns.*] A code message. [*Picks up card and pencil from the table and copies the message on the card, reading aloud from telegram.*] Seventeen—36K—nine—naught—Watertown. [*She starts on the last word, registering fright, repeats in a whisper of fear.*] Watertown! [*Glances around and then continues copying and reading.*] Seventeen—60B—21—3x—naught—47R—9—naught, “await orders.” [*Looks up at audience.*] And no signature. [*Carefully replaces telegram in the envelope, seals it and puts it back on the table, takes card, crosses to stairs, turns, facing audience, pauses.*] I wonder who this Mr. Billy is. [*Meditates.*] Can he be —? [*Pause.*] I wonder.

[*Exit up stairs slowly and out rear R.*

## MRS. GRAY.

[*Speaking outside at rear L.*] Bring him right into the house.

[*Enter from c. E. from rear L., followed by*  
BUB.



BUB.

I wonder how old Ishmael happened to be ridin' in a air-ship. He's a hermit who lives way up the mountain. He never comes to town and I'll bet he never saw a train of cars in all his hull life.

MRS. GRAY.

Tell Kittie to put on some hot water and bring my first-aid kit to Room 3.

BUB.

[*Making no move to obey.*] Yes'm. What do you suppose they was doin' up in a air-ship?

MRS. GRAY.

Never mind. Hurry up!

BUB.

[*Hurrying to door at L.*] Yes'm, I'm a-hurryin'.  
[*Exit, L.*]

BILLY.

[*Speaking outside at rear L.*] Careful, careful! Don't jar his head. [*Pause.*] Easy, there. That's right.

[*MRS. GRAY crosses to C. E. Enter from C. E. BORDEN and BILLY, supporting ISHMAEL, who has his arms around their necks. ISHMAEL'S eyes are closed and he appears very feeble. NANCY and AGGIE enter quietly and stand at C. E.*]

MRS. GRAY.

[*Crossing to door, R.*] Bring him in here.

[*Exit, R. BORDEN and BILLY lead ISHMAEL off at R. very slowly.*]

AGGIE.

[*Suppressed excitement.*] Oh, Nancy, is it the hermit?

NANCY.

Yes, that's what they said.

AGGIE.

Will he die?

NANCY.

I don't know. He's fainted, I guess.

AGGIE.

I wonder if they'd let me in to see him.

NANCY.

Certainly not.

AGGIE.

I never saw him before and I'm just crazy to get a good look at him.

NANCY.

Well, you can't. Maybe he's dying.

AGGIE.

Oh, I'd just love to see him. All the girls at school down in Skeehawken say some lady broke his heart years and years ago. Lizzie Carter saw him once in the woods, and it almost scared her to death. And he was just as frightened as she was. He ran one way and she the other. [*Crosses to R.*] I'm going in. They can't do no more than fire me out.

NANCY.

[*Takes her by the arm and leads her to C. E.*]  
You are not. There are too many in there already.  
You come right up-stairs to your room.

AGGIE.

[*Whines.*] I ain' goin' to. I wanna see him,  
and I wanna see the air-ship man. Lemme go in.  
I wanna see the hermit.

NANCY.

Keep still. If he saw you it would make him  
worse. He'd have a relapse right away.

[*Leads her out at rear R. and up stairs. Enter*  
*BUB from L., carrying a kettle of water.*

BUB.

Here's the water. [*Hurrying to R., spills some.*]  
Gosh! Wow, that's hot. Like to scalded the skin  
clean off'n my fool hand. Hotter'n old Jim Crow.

[*Enter MRS. GRAY from R.*

MRS. GRAY.

Take the water in, Bub.

BUB.

[*At door, R.*] Yes'm. Is he dead yit?

MRS. GRAY.

No. He's still in a faint. I think it's exhaus-  
tion.

BUB.

Exhaustion? Gee, that must be awful.

[*Exit, R. Enter MARY from L.*

MARY.

The boy said there had been an accident. Can I help you?

MRS. GRAY.

A man was flying up the mountain in an aeroplane. He saw an old man crossing a bridge. The old man was evidently exhausted and fell into the river. The aeronaut got him out and brought him here.

MARY.

[Crosses to door at R.] Maybe I can help them.

MRS. GRAY.

He seems in a sort of a daze.

MARY.

[Opens door at R. and looks in; starts back with an exclamation.] Oh!

MRS. GRAY.

What is it?

MARY.

It's Mr. Billy.

MRS. GRAY.

It is?

MARY.

Yes, the man I knew in the French hospital.

[Comes down C. to MRS. GRAY.]

MRS. GRAY.

Don't you want to go in and see him?

MARY.

Not now, please. I'm not very well. I'll see him this afternoon.

MRS. GRAY.

I didn't expect him until to-morrow. And to think he came in an air-ship. [*Crosses to door at R.*

MARY.

The man I knew in France. I can hardly realize it.

MRS. GRAY.

There's nothing like meeting old friends. He's awful good looking, isn't he?

MARY.

Yes.

MRS. GRAY.

Well, I hope you'll feel better. You haven't been well since you came back from Watertown.

[*Enter MISS MATCH down stairs; she comes in C. E. from up R.*

MISS MATCH.

Who was the man they carried in?

MRS. GRAY.

An old hermit who fainted from exhaustion.

MISS MATCH.

A hermit? Isn't that romantic?

[*Looks at MARY.*

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, you haven't met Miss Blake, have you? Miss Match, Miss Blake, the new housekeeper.

[*Ladies bow formally, MISS MATCH at c., MARY down L.*] Now you must excuse me. I have to look after the patient.

[*Exit at R. As soon as MRS. GRAY makes her exit MISS MATCH crosses down to MARY and stands looking at her in a domineering manner. Soft music: Chorus of "Long, Long Trail." MARY is distressed.*

MISS MATCH.

[*Coldly, in her natural voice; all traces of her "old maid" manner are now laid aside.*] You were crying all night. Haven't you any control of yourself at all?

MARY.

Oh, don't, don't! Why did you come here? Why couldn't you leave me in peace?

[*Crosses to chair at L. and sits.*

MISS MATCH.

Where else could I go? I thought we would be safe here in this out-of-the-way place. Mrs. Gray is your friend and if the worst comes to the worst you can count on her.

MARY.

We mustn't be seen together. Don't you realize how dangerous it is?

MISS MATCH.

It is more dangerous than you think. Pull yourself together; we have work to do. We'll probably have to leave to-night.

MARY.

Leave? Why?

MISS MATCH.

Because it isn't safe here. They're after us.

MARY.

I can't do it. I won't do it. I'm not afraid, I have been a coward too long. Now I'm going to show my hand. [*Rises and faces MISS MATCH bravely.*] I intend to stay here and if there is any danger I'll meet it face to face.

MISS MATCH.

You can't.

MARY.

I can. Do you think I'm going back to the old life? Until I went to France I never knew a moment's peace. Over there I found out the true meaning of life; my past was blotted out and I made a fresh start. There was a man over there who asked me to be his wife. He is here to-day.

MISS MATCH.

[*Startled.*] Here?

MARY.

He just came.

MISS MATCH.

But you can't marry him.

MARY.

Why can't I? Why should I be hounded all my life by bitter memories of the past? I tell you I made a fresh start. I'm going straight.

MISS MATCH.

[*Sneers.*] Straight? Getaway Bell going straight? That would be welcome news down at the police headquarters, wouldn't it? Welcome news! The reformation of Getaway Bell! It would look well in print.

MARY.

[*Sinks in chair and buries her face in her hands.*] Oh, don't, don't!

MISS MATCH.

[*Bending over her, speaking in a subdued but perfectly audible voice, malignancy in every tone.*] Do you suppose the men at headquarters will let you go straight? Do you suppose that they will give up the chase after that Watertown haul? You think you can live down your past, do you? Well, you can't. No matter where you are, no matter *what* you are—every day, every hour you'll be hounded by the fear that they are after you. You'll shrink from every stranger in the street, you'll suspect every one you meet. You may hide from the gang, you may hide from the police, but you can't hide from yourself.

MARY.

What do you want me to do?

MISS MATCH.

Nothing, at present. I am waiting for news from Croak. [*Crosses to table and picks up telegram.*] You see this message.

[*Play the next scene rapidly until MISS MATCH exits.*]



MARY.

[*Follows her.*] A telegram for Mr. Billy. That's the man.

MISS MATCH.

What man?

MARY.

The man I knew in France.

MISS MATCH.

The man who wanted to marry you?

MARY.

Yes.

MISS MATCH.

And do you know who he is? Do you know what he is? He is the man who's after us, the plain clothes man from headquarters.

MARY.

It isn't true.

MISS MATCH.

It is true. I read that message. It's written in code, all but three words. "Await orders" and "Watertown."

MARY.

[*Starts.*] Watertown?

MISS MATCH.

[*Crosses to stairs up R.*] That message is from the New York police.

[*Exit, up stairs.*]

MARY.

*[Standing by table, facing front, horror and agony depicted on face; pause long enough to count twenty.]* A plain clothes man from headquarters. *[Sinks in chair by table, buries face in arms on table, sobbing.]* It's all over. My dream is over, my dream is over! *[Sobs.]*

SLOW CURTAIN

## ACT II

SCENE.—*The same setting as Act I, but it is now 8 P. M. and the lights on the stage are lit. Strong firelight effect from the fireplace down L.*

NANCY is discovered at the rise of the curtain seated at the piano playing. BORDEN is reading a newspaper at center table. NANCY finishes her piano selection as the curtain rises.

BORDEN.

Where's Aggie?

NANCY.

Up in my room reading. She found an old book of fairy tales in the library and Mrs. Gray loaned it to her.

BORDEN.

I hope she'll be able to keep out of mischief for once in her life.

NANCY.

Don't worry so much about your sisters, Romeo. I think we can take care of ourselves.

BORDEN.

I'm afraid Aggie will say something about that Liberty Bond.

NANCY.

I don't think she will. She's old enough to know that it is important to keep still. Have you come to any conclusion yet?

BORDEN.

No, I can't imagine where it came from. If it dropped from one of the up-stairs windows it is almost certain that the thief is here in the Inn.

NANCY.

Surely you don't suspect Miss Blake.

BORDEN.

I don't suspect any one yet. I haven't made up my mind. I think I'd better go down to New York and turn the clue over to the police department.

NANCY.

Why not go to Watertown?

BORDEN.

The paper said that the bank had placed the case in the hands of the Ryan Detective Agency of New York.

NANCY.

I'm sure Miss Blake isn't a thief.

BORDEN.

Why?

NANCY.

I hardly know. Intuition, I guess. She has such a sad, sweet face. I think she's a regular darling. You don't think that bond came from her room, do you?

BORDEN.

No, I don't think it did. But it certainly came from somewhere.

NANCY.

Miss Blake is an angel.

BORDEN.

She seemed a little cold to me.

NANCY.

Angels generally do; it's the other kind that are warm.

*[Crosses to table; takes up pink knitting and sits R. of center table knitting.]*

BORDEN.

But she is so distant. She hardly noticed me at dinner.

NANCY.

What did you expect her to do? Fall on your neck and kiss you?

BORDEN.

Well, considering the fact that we've been regular patrons of the Silver Trout Inn for the past five years she might be a little more demonstrative.

NANCY.

What's become of Mr. Greener?

BORDEN.

Mrs. Gray said that he was spending the day in the village. He's a travelling salesman, you know.

NANCY.

Is he good looking?

BORDEN.

Oh, rather. But he's awfully young. Haven't you met him yet?

NANCY.

I haven't even seen him.

ISHMAEL.

[*Off stage at R.*] Oh, I'm falling! I'm falling. The water. Don't let me drown. Oh, oh!

[*His voice dies away.*]

NANCY.

That poor old man. I don't believe he'll get over that fall.

BORDEN.

The doctor said he'll gain consciousness to-night. The crisis has passed.

NANCY.

Wasn't it lucky that the air-ship man flew by just as he tumbled into the river?

BORDEN.

Yes. He's promised to take me up in the aero-plane to-morrow if the hermit is better.

NANCY.

I'm just dying to meet him. I think he is awfully good looking. He's got such a nice nose.

BORDEN.

The hermit?

NANCY.

Don't be a goose. Mrs. Gray expects several other guests to-morrow. A Mrs. Morann and her two daughters are coming from Rochester.

BORDEN.

That's good. Two or three live young women would waken up the place.

NANCY.

I've never been accused of being a dead one before.

BORDEN.

Oh, you're my sister.

NANCY.

And then there's Miss Match. She's demonstrative enough. How do you like her?

BORDEN.

About two thousand miles distant.

NANCY.

She seems quite taken with you.

BORDEN.

When a woman reaches her age and is still in the market she is apt to be taken with every man she sees. Who is she anyhow?

NANCY.

A wealthy maiden lady from some place in Ohio. She's to be here a month, at least. Funny old thing, isn't she? She treats that cat like it was a million dollar baby.

BORDEN.

I can't see why Miss Blake allows cats in the house. I hate 'em.

NANCY.

Kittie says she pays regular board for it.

BORDEN.

Kittie?

NANCY.

Yes, haven't you met Kittie?

BORDEN.

I don't think so. Is she one of the guests?

NANCY.

No, she's Mrs. Gray's maid, but she's awfully interesting.

BORDEN.

Good looking?

NANCY.

A dream. She's a brunette with black snappy eyes and dark, curly hair.

BORDEN.

Yes? I'm rather partial to brunettes.

NANCY.

Then you'll be partial to her. She's a most decided brunette.

[Enter AGGIE down stairs entering C. E. from rear R.



AGGIE.

Say, can I go fishing in the creek to-morrow? I got a whole can of fish-worms hid under the lounge.

NANCY.

Fishing? Certainly not. You're getting too old to be such a tomboy.

AGGIE.

If I ever want to do anything I'm always too old, or too young. I wonder if I'll ever be just the right age.

NANCY.

I'm afraid it will be too cold for you to go fishing to-morrow.

AGGIE.

Aw, gee, a girl never gets a chance at nothing. I wisht I was a boy, then I wouldn't care whether I went fishin' or not. It's awful tough bein' born a girl.

NANCY.

Why don't you run along up-stairs and finish that nice book of fairy stories?

AGGIE.

Aw, say, that book's too tame. No murders ner detectives ner Indians ner nothin'. Just fairies. Huh, I'd rather read about vamps. Well, anyhow, Mr. Greener's promised to take me ridin' in his flivver to-morrow.

NANCY.

I thought you wanted to fish.

AGGIE.

Well, there are different things to fish for, ain't there? I'm going to fish for a beau!

BORDEN.

Aggie, I'm astonished.

NANCY.

Aren't you rather young for that, Aggie?

AGGIE.

Nope. It's a *young* beau I'm fishing for. When I see how scarce the men are nowadays and old maids like Miss Match running around loose, it makes me think that a girl is never too young to start something. And, believe me, I'm going to start something.

BORDEN.

You'd better start to bed.

AGGIE.

Now don't be cross, Romeo. Kittie said you were such a nice looking man.

BORDEN.

Kittie?

AGGIE.

Sure. The maid. She peeked in when you were at dinner. She says she knows a fine looking man when she sees him, 'cause she's been married three times.

BORDEN.

Is that so?

AGGIE.

[*Goes to steps, turns to BORDEN.*] Yes, and in July she's going to celebrate the fourth.

BORDEN.

The fourth?

AGGIE.

Sure. The Fourth of July.

[*Laughs childishly and sits on steps.*]

BORDEN.

I think I'll have to have a look at Kittie.

NANCY.

She's worth looking at. Are you going to flirt with her?

BORDEN.

Oh, I didn't mean that. Maybe that mysterious Liberty Bond came from her room.

NANCY.

Her room is on the other side of the building.

BORDEN.

At any rate it will do no harm to see her.

NANCY.

Oh, you're an awful flirt, Romeo. Now you want to meet Kittie.

BORDEN.

[*Coughs.*] I believe I'm catching cold. Maybe she could make me a mint julep. I suppose she is in the kitchen.

[*Starts toward L. Enter MRS. GRAY from L.*]

NANCY.

Oh, Mrs. Gray, how is the hermit?

MRS. GRAY.

He was sleeping when I left about an hour ago.  
I was just going in again.

BORDEN.

[*Coughs.*] I believe I have a cold.

NANCY.

And he wants to see Kittie.

MRS. GRAY.

To see Kittie? What for?

BORDEN.

I thought she might be able to fix something for  
me.

AGGIE.

Oh, she will. Kittie's the best little fixer on the  
mountain.

NANCY.

My brother is awfully partial to brunettes.

MRS. GRAY.

[*Near L. door.*] I'll call her.

BORDEN.

[*At L. c.*] Thank you. I don't like to bother  
you.

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, we like to please our guests. [*Looks off L.  
and calls.*] Kittie!

KITTIE.

[*Outside at L.*] Ma'am?

MRS. GRAY.

Come here a moment.

NANCY.

[*Up R. of BORDEN, who has crossed to c.*] Wait till you see her, buddy

KITTIE.

[*Outside L.*] Yas'm, I'm coming.

BORDEN.

[*To NANCY.*] What a sweet voice.

MRS. GRAY.

Here she is.

[*KITTIE appears in doorway at L.*

KITTIE.

You want me?

MRS. GRAY.

[*Crosses down L.*] Mr. Borden wants to speak to you.

BORDEN.

[*Astounded.*] Good Lord!

KITTIE.

[*Goes to BORDEN.*] Yassir, here I am.

BORDEN.

I—er— [*rattled*] that is—er—I—

NANCY.

Go on.

AGGIE.

Shoot ahead, you're doing fine.

BORDEN.

I just wanted to know if I could [*sneezes*]*—that is, if you could —* [*Sneezes.*]

KITTIE.

If I could? [*Sneezes loudly.*] Yassir, I reckon I could. [*Crosses down to MRS. GRAY.*] Say, Mis' Mabel, wha's de matter wif dat man? He don' ac' right in de haid to me. Callin' me in yere to ax me kin I — [*Sneezes loudly.*]

BORDEN.

[*Coming down c.*] I'm catching cold. Could you give me a little—that is, could you make me a mint julep?

KITTIE.

'Deed and I dunno. Does you 'low a mint julep, Mis' Mabel?

MRS. GRAY.

[*Hesitates.*] Well, I'm not sure.

BORDEN.

It's to ward off a cold. [*Sneezes.*] I'm always troubled with a cold when the weather is bad.

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, if you ain't well —

KITTIE.

Dat man wants a good dose ob salts, pine-tar and vinegar. Dat's a heap better'n mint julep. Boss, I fix you up a description dat's warranteed to kill or cure. Jes' leave it to me. I knows how to cure a cold, yassir, I shore does.

BORDEN.

[*Gives her a silver quarter.*] I think a mint julep will be sufficient, Kittie. Go easy on the mint and strong on the julep. Make it a regular stick of julep.

[*MRS. GRAY, who has crossed to L. at rear, now exits at L., quietly.*]

KITTIE.

Man, I'll make it a log ob wood. My second husband, de late Mistah Ephraim Doosy, used to be troubled jes' dataway like you is, and I reckon I knows jes' what kind ob a stick you wants. Leave it to me, boss. Dis yere cullud lady is from old Kentucky, she is—and she shore knows a stick when she sees it. [*Laughs.*] Dem sticks am mighty salubrious in dis kind o' weather. [*Crosses to door at L.*] Yassir, boss, mighty salubrious, mighty salubrious. [*Exit, L.*]

BORDEN.

So that's Kittie, is it?

NANCY.

[*Laughs.*] That's Kittie. She's a decided brunette, dark curly hair, clear complexon and fast color warranted not to bleach, crock nor run.

AGGIE.

Yeah, how do you like her, buddy?

BORDEN.

It's time you were in bed, young lady.

AGGIE.

Oh, I can't stay cooped up there all day and night like a hen with the mumps. I gotta get the air once in a while and it's too early for bed. You treat me like I was a kid.

NANCY.

Aren't you?

AGGIE.

Not so you can notice it. I'm a young lady, I am. And if you don't let me go fishing to-morrow morning I'll tell something you don't want me to tell.

BORDEN.

Aggie! Why on earth do you want to go fishing?

AGGIE.

Well, there aren't any men to speak of up here at the Inn, so I'm going down to fish and see what I can catch. [*At steps.*] Get me, Steve?

[*Exit up stairs and off at rear R.*]

BORDEN.

I'll have to have a talk with her.

NANCY.

I think you had better turn that bond over to the police.



BORDEN.

Maybe that would be best. I'll send a telegram to the New York agency to-night.

NANCY.

And in the meantime we'd better see if we can't keep Aggie quiet. *[At steps.]*

BORDEN.

Yes. She talks entirely too much. *[Crossing to NANCY.]* I've been worried ever since she found that note. I'll turn the whole thing over to the detectives.

*[Exit up stairs with NANCY and off at rear R. Enter MARY from L. She crosses to table and arranges the books and papers. MRS. GRAY enters from R. and comes down to her.]*

MRS. GRAY.

He's sleeping easily now.

MARY.

Mrs. Gray, what is the real reason for Mr. Billy's visit here?

MRS. GRAY.

*[Startled.]* The real reason? Why do you think he is here?

MARY.

I don't know. I can't make it out. I want to know. It means a lot to me, Mrs. Gray. He's not here simply as a guest at the Inn, is he?

MRS. GRAY.

Well, no he ain't.

MARY.

And that other man, the old hermit?

*[Seated L. of center table.]*

MRS. GRAY.

I never seen him before in my life. He's awful queer. It gives him a spell to have women in the room. If he has a rational moment and sees a woman he screams like a maniac.

*[Seated right of center table. Enter BUB from R. with kettle.]*

BUB.

He wants some more hot water.

MRS. GRAY.

Kittie will get it for you. He's resting easy now, ain't he?

BUB.

I dunno. He jest lays there all quiet like he was dead er sump'm, and then all of a sudden he lets out a yell that skeers me clean outa my socks. I never seen nothin' like it. I give Mr. Billy his telygram.

MARY.

What did he say?

BUB.

He said, "All right," and gimme a nickel. And he's all right. I knowed jest as soon as I talked to him that he wasn't a crook.

MARY.

A crook? Did you think he was a crook?

BUB.

Wall, when I saw that telygram writ in code and addressed to a man named Billy fer a last name it jest naturally made me suspicious of sump'm. But he's all right. He's a reg'lar humdinger when it comes to nursin'.

MARY.

Is there anything we can do?

BUB.

No'm, not a thing. Mr. Billy's doin' it all. Ish-mael don't need no women folks. [*Turns at L. entrance toward MARY.*] All he needs is some hot water. [*Exit, L.*]

MRS. GRAY.

Ain't it strange that he should turn out to be the man you knew in France?

MARY.

Yes. That's why I wondered why he came here.

MRS. GRAY.

He's a sort of a private detective, or something like that. [*MARY starts.*] He's from Colorado and my lawyers sent him here. His uncle used to be a friend of my husband.

MARY.

But what is he doing here?

MRS. GRAY.

I'm going to hire him.

MARY.

What for?

MRS. GRAY.

To find my husband.

MARY.

Find him? Why, I always thought you were a widow.

MRS. GRAY.

Yes, every one thinks that. No, Mary, my husband still lives—at least, I hope so. But I haven't seen him for twenty-two years. He—*[hesitates, registering misery]* he—ran away. *[Enter BUB from L. carrying kettle carefully. He crosses to R.]* Bub, ask Mr. Billy if he can come here for a few minutes. Tell him an old friend of his is here. Just as soon as he can leave his patient.

BUB.

Yes'm.

*[Exit, R.]*

MRS. GRAY.

My lawyers in Denver have the highest regard for Mr. Billy. They think if any one can find my husband he can. It's a long story, Mary. For twenty-two years I've borne my burden in silence, hoping—praying for the day when I shall see him again, when I can kneel at his feet and ask forgiveness for one act of folly that separated us years ago.

MARY.

You say he ran away?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. It was this way. My folks had been poor miners out in Colorado and I never had much education or anything that makes life happy to a girl. John was a teacher in the high school and we met and liked each other. He got into some trouble with the faculty on account of his socialistic ideas and we decided to get married at once and move into the mountains. We had two years of heaven on earth, me and John, out there in the mountains together. My people were just beginning to make the mine pay and I was anxious to bring them and John together, but he was proud and he quarreled with my father. John was a college man and I never had any education to speak of, so I decided to study at night and try to make myself worthy of him. My father made a big strike in the mine and was a wealthy man, but John refused to let me see him. That wasn't right, was it?

MARY.

Why was he so opposed to your father?

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, one little thing led to another. They just couldn't agree. John was a socialist and father wanted him to bring me into the city and live like other folks. He offered us a fine home and everything, but John laughed in his face. Of course that led to hard words and John forbid me ever seeing my father again. Then he took sick, and we were all alone in the mountains. He had a fever and

often was delirious. I wanted to take him to the hospital in town, but he wouldn't even allow me to send for a doctor. I didn't know what to do. At last he got so bad that I rode for help and took him to the hospital in spite of his orders. That was right, wasn't it?

MARY.

Of course it was.

MRS. GRAY.

But it only made matters worse. John kept worrying about his expenses. We didn't have any money and I didn't know what to do. There was the doctors to pay and the nurses and the hospital bill. John was worse and I became desperate. I appealed to my father. He was glad enough to help me and I thought everything was going to be all right, but when I got back to the hospital John had disappeared.

MARY.

Disappeared?

MRS. GRAY.

He escaped from the nurses when they thought he was sleeping. He left a letter for me, a bitter, bitter letter, saying that I had deserted him in his trouble and that he never wanted to see me again. We searched everywhere but never found any clue. Shortly after that my father died and I was rich—rich, but it was too late. My husband had disappeared and my life's happiness was over. I have never seen him since, not a letter—not a trace in all these years—and I loved him more than my life.

[Sobs.]

MARY.

Have you tried the secret service?

MRS. GRAY.

I've tried everything. For twenty-two years the detectives have been looking in every part of the country. That is why I went into service in France; that is why I am here in the Adirondack Mountains. I want to be where I can search for him, where I can see as many men as possible—hoping—praying that I am not too late.

[Enter BUB from R.]

BUB.

The hermit's woke up and Mr. Billy says to tell you he can't leave him right away. He thinks he orter have some milk, er soup, er sump'm. Told me to heat him some milk and I told him we didn't have none—and we ain't. Then he spoke up real sassy and told me to git it anyhow. Wonder what he thinks I am—a cow, er sump'm?

MRS. GRAY.

Tell Kittie to make him some beef broth.

MARY.

There is a jar of beef extract in the refrigerator.

BUB.

[At L. door.] Yes'm.

[Exit, L.]

MARY.

And Mr. Billy is trying to help you find your husband?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. His uncle used to be an old friend of John's in Denver. About three months ago in looking over his uncle's papers he found an old letter of John's, written long before we were married, and telling of the beautiful views and good hunting in this part of the Adirondack Mountains. My lawyers thought it might be a clue and cabled to me. I came home as soon as I could and bought this place and they sent Mr. Billy to help me.

MARY.

That old man in there—do you suppose it is possible that he is your husband?

MRS. GRAY.

The hermit? Oh, no. He must be over eighty years old and John isn't fifty-five yet. Mr. Billy's meeting with the hermit was all an accident.

*[Enter KITTIE from L., carrying glass of julep on tray.]*

MARY.

Kittie, did you make the broth for the sick man?

KITTIE.

Yes'm, Miss Mary, it's done made. I gotta take dis yere mint julep up to dat Mr. Borden. He say put a stick in it. *[Laughs.]* Lawsy, I hopes he'll like dat old stick. It's strong enough to make a baby mouse fly at a hungry cat. *[Smells it.]* Ummm! Happy remembrance, happy remembrance!

MRS. GRAY.

You'll find Mr. Borden up in his room.



KITTIE.

[*Crossing to rear R.*] Yes'm. I certainly hope I's got dis yere mint julep strong enough for him.

MRS. GRAY.

It mustn't be too strong, Kittie.

KITTIE.

[*At foot of steps.*] No'm, it hain't, 'ceptin' ef he takes three glasses ob dis yere concoction he won't keer whether he's got de influenzy'er not!

[*Exit, C. E. and up stairs. Enter BUB from L., carrying a bowl and napkin.*]

BUB.

They're makin' a reg'lar strained nurse outa me. [*Crossing to R.*] I orter wear a red cross on my sleeve, er sump'm. [*Exit, R.*]

MARY.

Did Mr. Billy get his telegram?

[*MISS MATCH appears at foot of stairs unobserved.*]

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. The boy said it was written in code, and Mr. Billy seemed right worried when he read it. He asked me all kinds of questions about it, when it came and who brought it and where I'd laid it and if any one had read it. He's awful suspicious. [*Sees MISS MATCH.*] Oh!

MISS MATCH.

[*In her old maid manner.*] How is the sick man? I was so nervous up-stairs that I couldn't go to bed until I learned how he was.

MRS. GRAY.

He's better, I think.

MISS MATCH.

Oh, I'm so glad. I just *had* to come down and see if I could do anything for him. [*Slight pause.*] I want to meet the aviator, too. I'm just crazy about aviators.

MRS. GRAY.

I don't think Mr. Billy will meet any one to-night.

MISS MATCH.

Of course not, it's too late. But I'm so anxious to meet him in the morning.

MRS. GRAY.

I'll introduce him.

MISS MATCH.

Is he a friend of yours?

MRS. GRAY.

No, but I know his family.

MISS MATCH.

What business is he in?

MRS. GRAY.

I'm not certain. His uncle was in the wholesale paper business.

MISS MATCH.

Well, if there isn't anything I can do for that poor old man I think I'll go to bed. My nerves have been awfully upset. Good-night.

MRS. GRAY.

Good-night.

MISS MATCH.

Good-night, Miss Blake.

MARY.

[*Bows and murmurs.*] Good-night.

MISS MATCH.

Are you feeling better?

MARY.

Better?

MISS MATCH.

Yes. I heard you crying last night, you know.

MARY.

Oh, yes. I'm much better now, thank you.

MISS MATCH.

A little cry is the best thing in the world for a nervous woman, isn't it? Well, good-night!

[*Exit up stairs and off rear R.*]

MRS. GRAY.

Funny woman, isn't she?

MARY.

Peculiar.

[*Enter BUB from R.*]

BUB.

The old man's had his supper and gone to sleep.  
Mr. Billy wants to see you a minute, if he kin.

MRS. GRAY.

Certainly.

BUB.

[*At door, R., yells to some one off stage.*] She says you kin. [*Crosses to stairs.*] Say, Mis' Gray, ef you don't need me no more I think I'll go to bed.

MRS. GRAY.

All right. I think your room is all ready.

BUB.

Aw, I kin fix it, if it ain't. I'm a dandy chambermaid. You orter see me sweep the dirt under the bed and everything. [*Exit up stairs at rear R.*]

MARY.

[*Goes to L.*] I'll see that everything is locked up in the rear of the house.

MRS. GRAY.

Don't you want to meet your old friend, Mary?

MARY.

Not to-night, please. I'm not feeling quite myself. I'll see Mr. Billy to-morrow. [*Exit, at L.*]

MRS. GRAY.

Something is worrying Mary. I can't quite make it out. [*Enter BILLY from R.*]

BILLY.

[*Crosses down to MRS. GRAY and shakes hands with her.*] In the first place I want to thank you for letting me bring the old man here. He might

have died if we hadn't reached your place just when we did.

MRS. GRAY.

Was he sick?

BILLY.

He was half dead from starvation and exhaustion. I saw him faint as he was passing over a bridge. I flew by just as he fell into the water. Do you know him?

MRS. GRAY.

[*Seated at center table.*] No. Some one said he was an old hermit who lives up in the mountains. I don't know many people about here yet.

BILLY.

He'll be all right in the morning. The crisis has passed and he's resting quietly now.

[*Sits at center table.*]

MRS. GRAY.

I didn't expect you until to-morrow.

BILLY.

I had my aeroplane and I thought I'd gain a little time by using it.

[*Enter KITTIE down stairs.*]

KITTIE.

[*Crossing to door at L.*] Mistah Borden say he's gotta go down to the village to-night.

MRS. GRAY.

To-night? Why, it's awfully late now.

KITTIE.

He say he gotta send a telygram, and ef you're gwine to lock up early he wants to know kin he hab de front door key.

MRS. GRAY.

I'll wait till he comes down.

KITTIE.

Yes'm. Say, Mis' Mabel, he shore did do justice to dat mint julep. He swallowed it, julep, mint, ice and all. I declare I like to thought he gwine to swallow de tumbler, too. Dat man's shore got a capacity for mint juleps, he shore has.

*[Exit, L., still talking.]*

BILLY.

I wouldn't mind trying one of her mint juleps myself.

MRS. GRAY.

Of course. Shall I have her make you one now?

BILLY.

No, thank you. I'll wait till to-morrow. I expect to be up most of the night with Old Ishmael.

MRS. GRAY.

Is there any danger?

BILLY.

Not in the least. He might want something, that's all. *[Looks around.]* Cosy place you have here, Mrs. Gray.

MRS. GRAY.

Isn't it? I met a young girl in France—a nurse—who interested me. She wanted something to do here at home, so I bought this Inn and put her in charge as housekeeper.

BILLY.

A French nurse, eh?

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, no, she's an American.

BILLY.

Oh!

MRS. GRAY.

And my lawyers thought we might get some news of John here in the Adirondacks. He wrote a letter to your uncle years ago saying what a grand place this was.

BILLY.

Yes, I know. I hope we may be able to get some clue up here. Our man in Nevada and our men in New Mexico have been on false scents.

*[Takes small note-book from pocket and looks at it.]*

MRS. GRAY.

He spoke of the mountains in New York in his letter. Maybe he has been here all these years.

BILLY.

*[Referring to note-book.]* Let me see. He is fifty-four years old, has dark eyes and erect carriage. Rather slender. Hair brown. Probably

gray now. No distinguishing marks or scars. Fond of outdoor life, hunting, fishing and trapping. Loved solitude. Hated society and railed against the idle rich. Liked to be alone in the woods. [*Slight pause; he looks at her.*] Something of a hermit, eh? [*Pronounce "eh" like hay.*]

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. [*Pause.*] You don't think that he —  
[*Motions toward door at R.*]

BILLY.

Oh, no—not at all. Ishmael must be about eighty. And Mr. Gray was a man of education and refinement, wasn't he?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. He was a Cornell man.

BILLY.

My friend in there murders the king's English every time he opens his mouth. Still he's lived in the mountains for years. Maybe he can give us some valuable information. Can't you think of any other mark or trait that might help identify your husband?

MRS. GRAY.

No, I'm afraid I can't. [*Thinks.*] Let me see. He was very fond of Walt Whitman's poems. [*BILLY makes notes.*] He hated artificial flies in fishing, and he loved to camp out. It was a regular passion with him. He never slept in a bed. He used to wrap a blanket around him and sleep before the fire, but he always slept in the open if possible.  
[*Plant this speech in minds of audience.*]



BILLY.

Anything else? These little items may be very important, you know.

MRS. GRAY.

He was very fond of good books, but he cared little for music and nothing at all for art. I used to paint studies of the mountain landscape in a blank book I had but he tore it up and used it for shaving-paper. Probably the thing that would help you the most was his hatred of wealth and everything it could buy.

BILLY.

That's important.

MRS. GRAY.

Can you give me any hope? I have waited so long—have been disappointed so much following blind clues—but I'll not give up. As long as I have a penny, as long as I live—I'll keep up the search.

BILLY.

What was the nature of his illness when he disappeared?

MRS. GRAY.

He was just getting over a severe attack of typhoid fever.

BILLY.

Never had any mental or nervous trouble, did he?

MRS. GRAY.

I don't think so.

BILLY.

Just another question. Have you ever heard of Watertown, New York?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes, why?

BILLY.

Oh, nothing to do with your husband. I have been offered a job over there, but of course I will do all I can to help you first.

MRS. GRAY.

My housekeeper once lived in Watertown.

BILLY.

[Shows much interest.] She did?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. She has been visiting there ever since she returned from France. She came here only yesterday.

BILLY.

How long was she in Watertown?

MRS. GRAY.

I'm not quite sure. A month, at least. She was staying with friends.

BILLY.

[Quickly.] Who were they?

[MARY is heard off stage at L. singing the chorus of "Long, Long Trail" softly.]

MRS. GRAY.

I don't remember.

BILLY.

Didn't you write to her while she was there?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes, but I addressed the letters to the general delivery.

BILLY.

Listen!

MRS. GRAY.

What is it? [MARY *sings a little louder.*

BILLY.

Some one is singing. [*Rises.*] It sounds like a voice I used to hear in France. The song is the same, too.

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. Mary used to sing it in France.

BILLY.

Mary? Mary Blake?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. She's my housekeeper. She said she knew you.

BILLY.

Mary Blake your housekeeper?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. She was your nurse near Château-Thierry.

BILLY.

And [*hesitates*—she is the girl who has been spending the month in Watertown?

MRS. GRAY.

Yes. She said she'd see you to-morrow. She hasn't been well since she came here.

BILLY.

Pardon me.

[*Takes telegram from his pocket and studies it.*

MRS. GRAY.

Shall I show you to your room?

[*The singing ends softly.*

BILLY.

I think I'll stay in there. [*Motions toward R.*] The old man said he wanted to be alone, but he is sound asleep and won't know the difference.

MRS. GRAY.

Is there anything I can do for him?

BILLY.

Nothing, thank you.

[*Enter BORDEN from C. E., coming down stairs. He wears hat and coat.*

BORDEN.

I've got to go down to the village, Mrs. Gray. I think I can make it in an hour.

MRS. GRAY.

I'll get you the key.

BILLY.

It isn't necessary. I'll be in here.

BORDEN.

I hate to trouble you, but it's a very important message I want to get off to-night. The telegraph office is open until midnight and my flivver generally makes good time.

MRS. GRAY.

Good-night.

BORDEN.

[*In C. E.*] Good-night.

[*Exit, C. E. to L. rear. Enter KITTIE from L.*]

KITTIE.

[*Crosses to rear R.*] Everything in de back's done locked up now, Miss Mabel, and Miss Mary's done gone to bed. She said tell you she's feelin' better.

MRS. GRAY.

Oh, I'm glad of that. This has been a strenuous day, hasn't it, Kittie?

KITTIE.

Shore has and dis yere cullud lady is cert'n'y glad to hit de hay. [*Gives a prodigious yawn.*] Lawsy, seems like I could sleep till old brother Gabriel blowed his trumpet on de day ob jubilee. [*At window.*] Mistah Borden's gittin' in his flivver. I wonder how come dat man's galivantin' down to de village dis time o' night. Well, ef dere hain't nuffin else I kin do fo' you, Miss Mabel, I reckon I'll

retire right now so's I kin git ma beauty sleep before midnight. [*Laughs.*] Beauty sleep! De Lawd knows I needs it. [*Exit, C. E. and up stairs.*]

MRS. GRAY.

[*To BILLY, who has been studying his telegram at center table.*] I think I'll go up-stairs, Mr. Billy, and make you a memorandum of all my husband's characteristics. It might be of some help to you.  
[*Crosses to piano.*]

BILLY.

[*Crosses and stands with his back to fireplace.*] Yes, especially his early life and associations. [*Looks at telegram which he holds in his hand; pauses.*] By the way, Mrs. Gray, do you know anything about Miss Blake's past life? Before you met her in France, I mean?

MRS. GRAY.

[*At window, arranging curtains for the night.*] Yes. [*Slight pause; she turns to him.*] But it was told me in confidence.

BILLY.

[*Down L.*] I understand. I hope you will pardon me, but I'm awfully interested in Miss Blake. She's a wonderful girl.

MRS. GRAY.

Indeed she is—and a good girl, too.

BILLY.

[*Looks at telegram, then at MRS. GRAY; there is a slight pause.*] Is she?

MRS. GRAY.

[*Positively.*] Yes, Mr. Billy, she is. She's a girl in a million.

BILLY.

I'm glad to hear you say so, Mrs. Gray. Awfully glad. [*Impulsively tears telegram into bits and throws it in the fireplace.*] That is my opinion exactly.

MRS. GRAY.

I wonder if Kittie locked the window. [*Looks out of the window. Suddenly she utters a sharp cry of fright.*] Oh!

BILLY.

[*Hurries to her.*] What is it?

MRS. GRAY.

[*Points out of window.*] I thought I saw some one lurking in the shadow of that tree.

BILLY.

Shh! Don't be alarmed.

MRS. GRAY.

I'm sure I saw something move.

BILLY.

I'll see who it is. [*Closes window, snaps out all lights on the stage.*] Wait a moment.

[*Crosses to C. E. stealthily and exits C. E., going out at rear L. There is a marked pause, long enough for one to count twenty. This is important and helps to keep up the*

*suspense of the scene. The stage is almost dark, the only illumination coming from the fireplace. BILLY reënters at C. E.*

MRS. GRAY.

Did you see any one?

BILLY.

No, it must have been the shadow of a moving tree.

MRS. GRAY.

I thought it was a man. I'm a little nervous, I guess, but I feel perfectly safe with you in the house. Lock the door when Mr. Borden comes in. [Crosses to stairs.] Good-night!

[Exit up the stairs.]

BILLY.

Good-night, Mrs. Gray. [Crosses to the window, opens it and looks out, hiding himself from any one outside. Slowly takes revolver from his pocket and examines it. He crosses down to the fireplace and examines the revolver carefully by the firelight. He shows his satisfaction. A sound is heard outside at R. BILLY should take plenty of time looking at the revolver—the stage has been perfectly quiet and the audience is “keyed” and alert. As soon as BILLY hears the sound off R. he straightens up and listens tensely. Crosses to C. E. with revolver pointed at door R. BILLY conceals himself at C. E. The door at R. slowly opens and ISHMAEL appears wearing a bathrobe and carrying two blankets. He looks about stage and is apparently satisfied that he is alone. He crosses to



*window, opens it wide and extending his arms breathes in the air. BILLY appears watching him, visible to the audience but invisible to ISHMAEL. ISHMAEL slowly crosses down to fireplace, spreads a blanket in front of the fire, wraps the other one around himself and prepares to sleep. In the meantime BILLY has moved down back of the piano, watching ISHMAEL. Another pronounced pause, long enough to count fifteen. ISHMAEL sleeps. BILLY, slowly, watching ISHMAEL.] He never slept in a bed. He used to wrap a blanket around him and sleep before the fire. [Pause.] All right, John Gray, half of my work's done, anyway.*

*[Nods in approval, his eyes on ISHMAEL.]*

SLOW CURTAIN

### ACT III

SCENE.—*The same as before. Time, seven o'clock the next morning.*

*The rise of the curtain discovers the lights extinguished on the stage, but footlights, borders and heads on full. Strong bunch of yellows shine through the window. ISHMAEL is discovered asleep in front of the fireplace. After the curtain is up there is a slight pause and then a clock off stage strikes seven times. BILLY enters from R. briskly, crosses to ISHMAEL and shakes him.*

BILLY.

Come, wake up, it's morning. [*Slight pause, shakes him again.*] It's time to get up. Breakfast is ready. [*Bawls.*] Get up!

ISHMAEL.

[*Slowly awakens, yawns, stretches, sits on floor and looks around. Pause as ISHMAEL rubs his eyes.*] Wall, I'll be swunked!

BILLY.

[*Standing L. c.*] You'll be worse than that if you don't hurry and get dressed. Do you want the ladies to find you looking like that?

ISHMAEL.

[*Rises hurriedly on word "ladies," crosses to BILLY and grasps his arm.*] Ladies? Is there ladies here? I ain't seen a lady in fifteen years. [*Looks around.*] Where in Sam Hill am I?

BILLY.

Silver Trout Inn, up the mountain from the village of Skee-hawken, State of New York, U. S. A.

ISHMAEL.

[*Petulantly.*] Well, what am I doin' here? That's what I want to know. What am I a-doin' here, and who in Tunket air you?

BILLY.

Party by the name of Billy.

ISHMAEL.

Billy what?

BILLY.

[*Pleasantly.*] Just Billy. Plain Mr. Billy.

ISHMAEL.

[*Looks around puzzled.*] How'd I git here?

BILLY.

[*Nonchalantly.*] Flew.

ISHMAEL.

Flew? [*Pause.*] Say, what's the matter with you? Y' hain't crazy, er nothin', air y'? You don't act right to me. Flew! You hain't one of them lunnytics, air y'?

BILLY.

I don't think so. I simply tried to answer your question. You came here in an aeroplane.

ISHMAEL.

Who did?

BILLY.

You did.

ISHMAEL.

In an aeroplane?

BILLY.

Yes.

ISHMAEL.

Shucks, there ain't no sich thing.

BILLY.

You remember falling into the river yesterday, don't you?

ISHMAEL.

[*Puts hand to head, speaks slowly as if trying to remember.*] Seems like I do. I went acrost that dratted ole bridge and I got dizzy and then——

[*Pause.*]

BILLY.

Then you took a sudden little bath in the stream.

ISHMAEL.

[*Shivers.*] I remember. It was colder'n a icicle. I hate water worser'n pizen. I tried to swim, but I was sun-struck, er sump'm, and couldn't move a

muscle. Cramps, I cal'late. I got my mouth full of water and my ears and my nose and my eyes. I never knowed there *was* so much water in that durned stream. "Water, water everywhere nor any drop to drink."—Coleridge.

BILLY.

Coleridge?

ISHMAEL.

[*Recovering his pose.*] Yep, he's a feller I used to know. I sunk clean down over my head and everything. I forgot everything I ever knew and was headed straight fer the promised land—then somebody grabbed me—and that's all I remember.

BILLY.

It was this way. I was flying up the mountains in an aeroplane and saw you fall in the river. I lighted as quick as I could and jumped in after you.

ISHMAEL.

And pulled me out?

BILLY.

Exactly.

ISHMAEL.

[*Shaking his hand warmly.*] You saved my life, young man. You saved my life.

BILLY.

Oh, that's nothing.

ISHMAEL.

Nothing? It was the act of a hero. [*Changes tone to uneducated hermit again.*] And you flew

in one of them air-ships, did y'? Wall, wall, don't that beat all? I've heerd tell on 'em, but I never thought I'd live to see one. And you saved my life, and brung me here in a air-ship.

BILLY.

It came pretty near being your last flight, too. If I hadn't lighted here and put you to bed just when I did you'd been flying up toward the pearly gates this very minute.

ISHMAEL.

[*In a dazed manner.*] When did all this happen? I feel kinder dazed and don't seem able to recollect things real good.

BILLY.

Yesterday.

ISHMAEL.

Yes. I kinder remember now. Somebody put me to bed. I hate beds. Ain't been in a bed before fer over twenty years. There was a woman bendin' over me in there, wa'n't there?

BILLY.

Yes, but you saw her and let out such a screech that it frightened her and she ran away.

ISHMAEL.

[*Laughs cackling laugh.*] Frightened her, hay? I'm glad of it. I'm glad of it. I didn't want her 'round. I hain't got no use fer women.

BILLY.

Don't like water, don't like swimming, don't like beds and don't like women. Some nut!

ISHMAEL.

What say?

BILLY.

I said [*with a peculiar pronunciation*] "some nut"; that's an expression in French. I learned it in the trenches.

ISHMAEL.

So you were in the trenches, hay? Shake hands agin. I heerd we had a war over in the trenches, but I never met no soldiers who's been in it. How'd it come out?

BILLY.

Eagle right on top.

ISHMAEL.

I might 'a' knowed it. And so you was in it. Wall, wall! You see me bein' a hermit up thar in the mountains I don't hear much of what's goin' on.

BILLY.

[*Snaps fingers and sings.*] He's a little mountain flower, growing wilder every hour.

ISHMAEL.

[*Looks at him in astonishment.*] Say, young feller, sump'm's the matter with you, sure. [*Taps his forehead.*] You ain't right, er sump'm.

BILLY.

Just a little effervescent, uncle, just a little effervescent.

ISHMAEL.

Wall, I cal'late it's all right. You saved my life and I guess you kin be effervescent, ef you want to.

BILLY.

Say, you're not a married man, are you?

ISHMAEL.

Who, me? Wall, not so as you kin notice it. It's rheumatism makes me look this way.

BILLY.

You must be a good deal younger than you look.

ISHMAEL.

That's right. Oncet I was young and happy as you are, but look at me now. I trusted a woman.

BILLY.

What did she do?

ISHMAEL.

Me. She was my wife.

BILLY.

Oh, so you *have* been married.

ISHMAEL.

Yep, but she run away with a Baptist preacher and I ain't seen her since.

[*Enter NANCY and AGGIE down stairs at rear*  
R. *The men do not see them.*]

BILLY.

[*To ISHMAEL.*] There, there, don't get excited. You might get dizzy again like you did yesterday.

ISHMAEL.

I'm all right now, but I want to git away from here. Women folks around jest seem to pizen the



air. I wanter git back to the top of the mountain where I'll never hear a woman's voice, never speak to one, er see one. I wanter git up so high in the mountains that they can't git at me. I never want to see —

NANCY.

[*Comes down c., between BILLY and ISHMAEL.*]  
Good-morning.

ISHMAEL.

[*Jumps high in fright.*] Greasy grasshoppers, a woman! Whar's my pants? What did you do with my clothes? [*Rushes out at R.*]

AGGIE.

[*Comes down L.*] Was that the hermit?

BILLY.

[*At R.*] Yes, didn't he look like it?

AGGIE.

Oh, I thought he'd be all dressed up in beads and feathers and things. [*Pause; she crosses to c., speaking to BILLY.*] Say, mister, will you lemme have a ride in your air-ship?

NANCY.

[*At L. c.*] Aggie!

AGGIE.

[*At R. c.*] Aw, what's wrong with that?

BILLY.

[*At R.*] Why, certainly, if your family will allow it.

AGGIE.

Then it's all off. My family never allow nothing.

[*Enter BORDEN, coming down stairs.*]

BORDEN.

Good-morning.

BILLY.

Good-morning.

BORDEN.

Did you finally get the old man to bed?

BILLY.

No, I left him here asleep. He never heard you come in.

BORDEN.

Have you met my sisters? Nancy, this is Mr. Billy.

BILLY.

[*Bows.*] Pleased, I'm sure.

NANCY.

Thank you.

AGGIE.

[*Coughs to attract BORDEN's attention.*] Hm! You got another sister, too. I'm little but don't forget I'm still on earth.

BORDEN.

Oh, yes. Mr. Billy, this is Aggie.

AGGIE.

[*Crosses and shakes hands with BILLY vigorously.*] Say, I'm awful glad to know you. All of the girls are perfectly crazy about aviators. And I think you're the bravest man—rescuing the hermit and everything.

BORDEN.

[*At L. door.*] Come, Aggie, breakfast is ready.

AGGIE.

In a minute. Are you going to eat now, Mr. Billy?

BILLY.

No. I have to look after my patient first.

AGGIE.

Come to our table when you come in. I want to make that old maid Miss Match jealous. She's got it in for me 'cause I stepped on the tail of her cat. [*Enter BUB from C. E., coming from rear L.*

BUB.

Say, Mr. Borden, what you think?

BORDEN.

[*Down L.*] What is it, Dusenberry?

BUB.

[*Near him.*] Miss Match borrowed your flivver about an hour ago and driv down to the village.

AGGIE.

Well of all the nerve!

NANCY.

Aggie!

BORDEN.

Oh, that's all right. I suppose she'll be back soon.

BUB.

I jist thought I'd let you know, that's all. Seems kinder suspicious to me, her runnin' off with your flivver and everything.

BORDEN.

It's all right. Come, girls.

[NANCY and AGGIE cross to him at L.

BUB.

Breakfast is all ready. Got ham and waffles and grape-nuts, grape-fruit and eatin' grapes. I ain't had so much to eat since I waited table at ———  
[insert local name] weddin'.

[Exit, C. E. and out rear L.

AGGIE.

Oh, let's hurry. I always want to be first in the dining-room.

[Exit, L.

BORDEN.

Aggie!

[Exit, L.

NANCY.

We'll have to eat by ourselves, I suppose. Mr. Greener hasn't come home yet, has he?

BILLY.

I don't think so.

NANCY.

Isn't it odd? I've been here two days and haven't met him yet. *[Exit, L. AGGIE looks in at L.]*

AGGIE.

Say, Mr. Billy, you'd better hurry if you want to git a good breakfast.

BILLY.

I'll be in presently.

AGGIE.

I'll wait for you. *[Throws kiss at him.]* See you later, Billy. *[Exit, L.]*

BILLY.

*[Down R.]* Not if I see you first. *[Sits at small table. Soft music: Chorus of "Long, Long Trail." BILLY reads book. Enter MARY down stairs; she comes down L. BILLY sees her, rises and crosses eagerly to her, c.]* Why, how do you do, Miss Blake?

MARY.

*[Shakes hands with him at c.]* How do you do, Mr. Billy? *[End music.]*

BILLY.

Mrs. Gray said you were here. This is a delightful surprise. How are you?

MARY.

Splendid. And you—you've quite recovered, haven't you?

BILLY.

Quite. I don't look much like the man in the hospital now, do I, Miss Blake?

MARY.

I'm glad you are well. Your case was very puzzling—[*pause; looks at him*] and so were you.

BILLY.

Was I? How?

MARY.

You disappeared so suddenly.

BILLY.

Discharged as cured.

MARY.

But no one seemed to know when you left or where you went.

BILLY.

That was part of the game.

MARY.

The game?

BILLY.

Sure. I was in the secret service, you know.

MARY.

No, I didn't know. But that explains everything. We all wondered how you happened to be in the thick of the battle wearing civilian clothes.

BILLY.

I was after a couple of spies in our own lines, and I generally get what I go after.

MARY.

You generally get what you go after?

BILLY.

They were Germans disguised as doughboys giving vital information to the enemy. They had a secret wire with them wherever they went. I said I'd get it. [*Slight pause.*] And I did.

MARY.

And the spies?

BILLY.

[*Lightly.*] Oh, I got them, too.

MARY.

And you attacked that dugout. I heard about that. You got them, too.

BILLY.

Yeah, after a while. But they nearly got me. Not quite, you know—just nearly. It was a tough pull getting over that little dugout scrap, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

MARY.

Why?

BILLY.

Because it gave me a chance to meet you.

MARY.

I didn't think you'd even remember me.

BILLY.

I'll never forget you. By George, it seems only yesterday—those days in the old hospital near Château-Thierry. Do you remember that last evening in the purple shadows of the French twilight when you sang the "Long, Long Trail"?

MARY.

[*Softly.*] I remember.

BILLY.

I believe that was what made me well enough to leave the hospital. You sat by the window with your little guitar and sang to me. I'll never forget it. I could see one little star shining through the window. A star of hope.

MARY.

[*Sits at the piano.*] I always love that song.  
[*Sings the chorus softly.*]

BILLY.

Thank you. There's a long, long trail winding down the path of every one's dream, isn't there?

MARY.

Yes. [*Pause.*] But mine is a lonely trail.

BILLY.

Lonely? Why?



MARY.

There's a long, long night of waiting until my dreams all come true.

BILLY.

Till the day when I'll be going down the long, long trail with you. *[Takes her hands.]*

MARY.

*[Gently removes her hands from his.]* We don't know what to say to each other, do we? That's because we don't really know each other—not so much. I heard you were here last night and I've been thinking a great deal since.

BILLY.

Since you heard I was here?

MARY.

Yes. What sort of a girl did you imagine me to be back there in the hospital?

BILLY.

The sort of a girl you are.

MARY.

What sort of a girl am I?

BILLY.

You are unusual.

MARY.

Why?

BILLY.

You are different from the girls I know.

MARY.

[*Laughs nervously.*] You don't know what to say. Really you know very little about me. You have everything to find out.

BILLY.

[*Slowly and gravely.*] And do you want me to find everything out?

MARY.

[*Starts.*] What do you mean by that?

BILLY.

I was just wondering if you really wanted me to know the real Mary Blake. Sometimes in the hospital I used to think you were worrying about something. Won't you let me help you? Won't you? Maybe I can—that's part of my business, in the secret service, you know. I believe I could help you, if you'd let me.

MARY.

No one can help me. I don't ask help. All I ask is to be let alone—to be given the chance that every woman should have. That's all I want—a chance, a chance to make good.

BILLY.

Mary, I'm your friend. After all you did for me over there in the hospital, don't you believe it? Won't you trust me?

MARY.

I have told you all I can.

BILLY.

Mary, did you ever know Bell Summers?

MARY.

[Starts.] Yes. Why do you ask me that?

BILLY.

Do you know the police are looking for her? [Pause; MARY is silent and turns away from him.] She is the notorious Getaway Bell. She is wanted for the Watertown bank robbery. Plain clothes men are scouring the country looking for her. They know she was headed this way. Have you seen her?

MARY.

Why do you ask me that?

BILLY.

You said you knew her. Mary, I want to help you. I want to be your friend. That night over there in France when I asked you to be my wife you said we could never be anything but friends. Now I'll take you at your word. I'm going to be your friend. This Bell Summers is a crook, a dangerous crook, known to the police as Getaway Bell, because she always manages to escape. Did you know that? [After slight pause, MARY nods her head in assent.] I thought I'd put you wise, that's all. This time she can't make a getaway. We're after her, and we're going to get her. Understand? It may be a matter of weeks—or months—or years, but we're going to get her.

MARY.

You have a clue?

BILLY.

Yes, Mary, I have a clue.

MARY.

Suppose—[*speaks with difficulty*] suppose she were a friend of mine—a relative. Would you blame me for helping her? Suppose I were a criminal myself.

BILLY.

You?

MARY.

It's true. I am an ex-convict.

BILLY.

Mary!

MARY.

Now you see why I would not consent to marry you. You see I can never be anything else than what I am—I can't go straight—they won't let me. If the police learn I am here they will arrest me on some trumped-up charge to find out what I know of Getaway Bell.

BILLY.

[*Goes to her and takes her hands, looks in her eyes.*] You're straight now, Mary.

MARY.

[*Hesitates, then looks at him.*] Yes, I'm straight now.

BILLY.

Then I'm going to help you keep straight.

MARY.

Do you think I can do it?

BILLY.

I know you can. Now, tell me the whole story.

MARY.

After I finished my course in high school my father died and I went to Watertown to work in a department store. [*Speaks with difficulty.*] One day—some things were missing from the stock—and one of the detectives found a fur neck-piece in my locker hidden in my coat. I—I didn't take it. I didn't, I didn't! It was a frame-up. I was arrested and convicted on circumstantial evidence. I spent fourteen months in the penitentiary. Fourteen months, Mr. Billy, and I was innocent! After my release I couldn't get work, my record was against me. I was desperate. I didn't know what to do. I went to New York, but it was the same old story over again. Then I met a woman who had been in prison with me. She gave me a home. She said she would help me. I had no money and I was alone in New York—alone and hungry. I went with her. A week later I learned that she was connected with a band of thieves. I escaped from the house and volunteered for work in France. I became a nurses' helper and was sent overseas. I tried to live down the past, I tried to forget, but the memory of those prison days haunted me; everywhere I went I seemed to see the iron bars and the stripes and the stone walls. I can't forget—no matter what I do—no matter where I go, I can't forget. I can't forget. [*Sobs on table.*]

BILLY.

I am glad you have told me this. [*Takes her hands.*] You need a friend, one who can shield you and protect you. Mary, I will be that friend.

MARY.

You believe my story?

BILLY.

Every word.

[*Enter KITTIE from L.*

KITTIE.

'Scuse me, Miss Mary, but how many helpings ob waffles am I supposed to gib dat little Aggie chile? She's done et four and I'm skeerd ob her digestion. Her folks say she can't hab no more and she say she gwine to tell about de thousand-dollar Liberty Bond 'less'n she gits what she wants. Mighty unpacifying, mighty unpacifying!

[*Enter MISS MATCH from rear L. She stands in C. E., unobserved by the others.*

AGGIE.

[*Outside at L.*] I will have it. I will! I'll have what I want to eat or know the reason why.

[*Enter AGGIE from L., followed by BORDEN and NANCY.*

BORDEN.

Do you want to be sick? You come right upstairs to your room. My patience is at an end.

[*Takes AGGIE roughly by the arm. ISHMAEL appears in doorway at R., unobserved.*

AGGIE.

You let me alone; if you don't I'll tell everybody where I found that thousand-dollar Liberty Bond out in the front yard.

BORDEN.

Aggie!

[*Jerks her to C. E and up-stairs, followed by NANCY. ISHMAEL disappears.*]

KITTIE.

Thousand-dollar Liberty Bond? What's dat chile talkin' about?

MARY.

Oh, that was just some childish nonsense.

MISS MATCH.

[*Comes down R.*] I had the nicest little spin. I've been clear down to the village and back. I love to get up early in the morning and take a ride. It gives one such an appetite.

KITTIE.

Breakfast is ready.

MISS MATCH.

I'll go right in. Have you had your breakfast, Miss Blake?

MARY.

Not yet.

MISS MATCH.

I hate to eat alone. Why don't you introduce me to the gentleman?

MARY.

[*At c.*] Miss Match, this is Mr. Billy.

MISS MATCH.

[*Crosses to him at L. C. and shakes hands.*] Oh, I've been wanting to meet you ever since you came. It was so brave of you to rescue that old man. And so romantic! In an air-ship and everything. Just like one of the heroes of olden times. You ought to have a golden medal pinned to your chest by some fair damsel. I think you are just wonderful. As a reward for your bravery I'll let you eat breakfast with me.

BILLY.

[*With mock politeness.*] Oh, thank you.

MISS MATCH.

[*Crosses to door at L.*] I have several gentlemen friends in the air service. That is what makes me so interested in you. [*Comes back to him and takes his arm.*] I suppose you have many queer experiences and meet many queer people.

BILLY.

[*Significantly.*] Oh, yes. I meet queer people all the time. Sometimes I eat breakfast with them.

[*Crossing to door L. with her.*]

MISS MATCH.

You surely don't think I'm queer, do you? My gentlemen friends have often told me that I was very, very interesting, but I've never been called queer. But then, of course, I'm not like other girls.



BILLY.

No, I don't think you are. You're quite unique.

MISS MATCH.

Oh, you say the most flattering things. I knew I was going to be fascinated the minute I laid eyes on you. *[They go out at L., she chattering.]*

KITTIE.

*[Throws up her hands.]* Lawsy, lawsy, dat old maid shore is working hard to get a man. Ain' dat scan'lous? And dat pore innocent young man jes' swallowed de bait—hook, line and sinker. Um, um! Right before our very eyes. *[Goes to L.]* First thing we knows she gwine kidnap dat boy 'fore he gets his second wind. Mighty scan'lous, mighty scan'lous!

*[Exit, L. BUB enters C. E., coming from rear L.]*

BUB.

*[Coming down R.]* Say, Miss Blake.

MARY.

*[Starts.]* Yes?

BUB.

*[Seriously.]* Did you know there was a detective here in the house?

MARY.

A detective?

BUB.

Yep. And he's wise to a whole lot of things, too.

MARY.

Who is it?

BUB.

Me. I'm a detective. Took three lessons already in a correspondence school. That's the reason I'm so suspicious. Say, did you ever see a crook?

MARY.

Why do you ask?

BUB.

I jest kinda want to git a line on what they look like close up. You been over in France. There must have been a lot of crooks over there.

MARY.

I don't know.

[BILLY appears at door L., unobserved.]

BUB.

First I had my suspicions of Mr. Billy, 'cause he got a telygram writ in code, but I think he's on the level, all right, don't you?

MARY.

Yes, I know he is.

BILLY.

Thank you.

MARY.

[*Rising confused.*] Oh, I didn't know you were listening.

BILLY.

Has Mrs. Gray come down yet?

MARY.

No. I went to her room but she said she wasn't feeling well. She has a headache. I must take her up some breakfast. *[Crosses to L. door.]*

BILLY.

Tell her I've got some good news for her. It's great. Tell her that when she hears what I've got to tell her she'll forget she ever had a head, and tell her to prepare herself for a great shock. It's great news.

MARY.

Good news?

BILLY.

The best in the world.

MARY.

I'll tell her.

*[Exit, at L.]*

BILLY.

*[Looking after her.]* Great girl that.

BUB.

Betcher life. She used to be a nurse over in France.

BILLY.

I know—and she was a great nurse, too.

*[Enter ISHMAEL from R. wearing tattered coat and hat.]*

ISHMAEL.

I'm goin'.

BILLY.

Going? Not on your life. You haven't had your breakfast yet.

ISHMAEL.

Do I have to go in thar to git it? [*Points to L.*

BILLY.

Sure, that's the dining-room.

ISHMAEL.

I ain't et in a dining-room in nearly thirty years.

BILLY.

Oh, that's all right. They still use forks.

ISHMAEL.

I can't go in thar where there's a lot of women folks.

BILLY.

Why not?

ISHMAEL.

'Cause I don't want to associate with women.

BUB.

Ain't that peculiar?

ISHMAEL.

I'm goin' back to my cave in the mountains.

[*Starts for C. E.*

BILLY.

[*Dragging him back.*] Nothing doing. Absolutely nothing. You're liable to fall in the creek again.

ISHMAEL.

Say, I think I'm in a lunatic asylum. I never saw folks act so queer.

BILLY.

Never mind, uncle, never mind.

ISHMAEL.

But I want to get away.

BILLY.

Do you suppose I'm going to let you get away after all the trouble I've taken to land you?

ISHMAEL.

Land me?

BILLY.

[*Quickly.*] Out of the water, I mean. When I brought you to the shore, didn't I land you? Bub will bring you something to eat. Just wait in there. You'll be a regular ten-dollar-a-day guest and have your breakfast in bed.

ISHMAEL.

Honest, I don't understand a word you're talking about. But if you think you kin charge me ten dollars a day you're makin' a mistake. You can't charge me ten cents, 'cause I ain't got it.

BILLY.

Oh, never mind a little thing like that. You're here as the guest of the house. I've got to keep my eye on you, uncle. Why, you are the very first mystery I've ever solved.

BUB.

Gosh, is he a mystery?

ISHMAEL.

[*Savagely.*] No, I ain't. I ain't nothin' but just a hermit.

BILLY.

You'd better duck and get under cover.

ISHMAEL.

But I want to go home.

[*Enter MISS MATCH from L. with napkin tucked in her neck.*]

MISS MATCH.

Oh, there you are.

ISHMAEL.

A woman!

[*Exits quickly at R. with long strides.*]

MISS MATCH.

I thought you were coming back and I waited and waited and waited.

BUB.

She orter git a job in the dining-room. We need another waiter.

BILLY.

I had to look after my hermit. Bub, tell the cook to poach him a couple of eggs on toast and take him a cup of coffee.

MISS MATCH.

Don't you want to come back with me?

BILLY.

Oh, I'd just love to do that, but I've got to take care of the sick man.

MISS MATCH.

I'll see you after breakfast. I want you to show me your aeroplane. I'm just crazy about aeroplanes. Then we can take a nice little walk up the hill. Every morning I take a little tramp up to Sunset Rock.

BILLY.

That's nice.

BUB.

Where is he?

MISS MATCH.

Where is who?

BUB.

The little tramp. [*Dodges as she looks at him.*]  
Don't you hit me.

MISS MATCH.

I'll hurry, Mr. Billy. [*Crosses to door at L.*]  
Don't run away and leave me. [*Exit, at L.*]

BILLY.

Bub, hurry and see about Ishmael's breakfast.

BUB.

I'll bet a dollar he'll be gone the minute you leave him alone.

BILLY.

Then we mustn't leave him alone. Whatever happens the hermit has got to stay here until Mrs. Gray sees him.

BUB.

Why?

BILLY.

I can't tell you.

BUB.

Is it a mystery?

BILLY.

Something like it.

BUB.

Say, he ain't a crook, is he?

BILLY.

No.

BUB.

And yet it's a mystery. Maybe he's a long-lost heiress.

BILLY.

Hurry and get him something to eat or he'll be a corpse.



BUB.

All right. I allus *did* have my suspicions about him anyhow. [*Crosses to door at L.*] If you got any detective work to be did, Mr. Billy, jest call on me, 'cause I'm crazy to git the experience and satisfaction guaranteed.

[*Struts out at L. Enter BORDEN down stairs at rear R.*

BILLY.

Mr. Borden!

BORDEN.

[*Comes down to him.*] Yes?

BILLY.

What did your little sister mean about finding a thousand-dollar bond in the front yard?

BORDEN.

Oh, did you hear her say that? Just a fairy tale, that's all. Aggie has been reading too much fiction lately.

BILLY.

I thought maybe it was one of the missing bonds from the Watertown bank robbery.

BORDEN.

What would it be doing here?

BILLY.

That's just what I am trying to find out. I thought that maybe you could help me. You're the prosecuting attorney of this county, aren't you?

BORDEN.

Yes, but I don't know who you are.

BILLY.

[*Hands him a card.*] Party by the name of Billy.

BORDEN.

[*Reads card, pauses, looks at BILLY.*] So you are with the Ryan Detective Agency?

BILLY.

Yes, I'm from the Denver branch.

BORDEN.

Then come up-stairs, I have something to show you.

BILLY.

One of the missing bonds?

[*As they cross to stairs.*]

BORDEN.

You've guessed it. Though I can't imagine how it got here in the Silver Trout Inn.

[*They go up stairs, and go out rear R. There is a slight pause then ISHMAEL opens the door at R. quietly and enters, looking around. He carries his shoes in his hand. He sneaks to C. E., looks up stairs and is about to exit at rear L. when BUB enters from L. and sees him.*]

BUB.

Halt! [*Slight pause, as ISHMAEL looks at him.*] You're discovered.

ISHMAEL.

I'm goin' home. [BUB *rushes to him and grabs him by the arm.*] Say, what's the matter with all you folks anyhow? Can't I leave if I want to?

BUB.

Leave? Wall, I should say not.

ISHMAEL.

It's a free country, ain't it?

BUB.

Yeah, I guess so, when Congress ain't in session.

ISHMAEL.

I thought you was goin' to git me something to eat.

BUB.

That's right. The cook's fixin' it now. Just go back and lie down.

ISHMAEL.

I don't want to lie down. [BUB *leads and pushes him to door at R.*] I want to git away, I tell you.

BUB.

[*Grabs ISHMAEL's shoes from his hand.*] Gimme them shoes and I'll git 'em shined fer you.

[*Starts toward L.*]

ISHMAEL.

You gimme back them shoes. What you tryin' to do—rob me?

[*Enter GENE from rear L. and through C. E.*]

BUB.

Oh, Mr. Greener, the old man wants to leave and Mr. Billy said he's got to stay. I can't do nothin' with him.

GENE.

What's the matter, uncle?

ISHMAEL.

I wanna go back to the mountain.

BUB.

He's crazy and we gotta keep him here.

[GENE and BUB push ISHMAEL off at R., both talking in a soothing way to him while he objects loudly.]

GENE.

[Closes the door.] Now all you've got to do is to watch the door.

BUB.

I got his shoes, anyhow. He can't git back to the mountain without no shoes. Now I'll git his breakfast.

[Exit, at L. Enter BILLY down stairs at rear R. He starts to exit at L.]

GENE.

Oh, Mr. Billy!

BILLY.

[Turns.] Yes?

GENE.

I just came up from the village. I have something for you.

BILLY.

[Crosses down R. to GENE.] What is it?

[NANCY enters down stairs from rear R. and crosses down to door at L.

GENE.

They told me to bring it up to you. It's very important. I wasn't sure I'd find you here, but I thought I'd take a chance. [Sees NANCY and is much impressed.] Oh! [Arranges collar, tie, etc.

NANCY.

[At door L.] Miss Blake said she wanted to see you, Mr. Billy. She'll be down in a minute.

[Crosses to C.

BILLY.

Thank you.

[NANCY sits at piano and runs hands very lightly over the keys.

GENE.

[Down R. with BILLY.] Say, who's the queen in pink?

BILLY.

Oh, a girl. What did you say you had for me?

GENE.

Yes, of course I can see she's a girl, but who is she?

BILLY.

Miss Borden. She's here with her brother. Was it a package?

GENE.

[*Looking at NANCY.*] A package? What do you mean package?

BILLY.

The thing you brought me from the village.

GENE.

Say, she's some queen, isn't she? Why don't you introduce me?

BILLY.

Why, certainly. Miss Borden!

NANCY.

[*Rises.*] Yes?

BILLY.

I want to present Mr. Greener.

GENE.

[*Crosses to her quickly and shakes hands.*] Delighted, I'm sure. Have you been here long?

NANCY.

Two days.

GENE.

Great place, isn't it?

NANCY.

Oh, delightful.

GENE.

Got a golf course and everything.

NANCY.

Do you like to play golf?

GENE.

I'm a regular golf-hound.

NANCY.

So am I. But I've been waiting for two days to find some one to play with.

BILLY.

[*Crosses to GENE'S R.*] Didn't you have something for me?

GENE.

In a minute. In-a minute. [*To NANCY.*] How would you like to go out and look at the links?

NANCY.

Fine. This would be a dandy morning for a game.

GENE.

I'm on—are you?

NANCY.

I'll be ready in a minute. Wait till I get my hat.

BILLY.

What was it?

GENE.

My clubs are on the front porch.

NANCY.

I won't be a minute.

[*Crosses to stairs, followed by GENE.*]

GENE.

You can't be too quick for me.

BILLY.

[Follows GENE.] Say! Didn't you bring ——

GENE.

[Turns to BILLY.] Just a moment. [Turns to NANCY.] I'll wait for you right here.

NANCY.

All righty. [Runs up stairs and exits rear R.

BILLY.

Now, if you can give me that moment you spoke about ——

GENE.

Say, she's some girl.

BILLY.

Oh, yes. But you said ——

GENE.

I'm perfectly dippy about blondes.

[Looks up stairs.

BILLY.

Say! What did you bring me from the village?

GENE.

A telegram. They said it was very important. Let me see, what did I do with it? [Feels in pockets.] I know I had it. [Looks up stairs.] Say, I'm awfully glad I happened to register here at this Inn.



BILLY.

So am I.

GENE.

Fine little girl, isn't she? What was I looking for? Oh, yes—your telegram. There it is.

*[Hands it to him.]*

BILLY.

Much obliged.

GENE.

Oh, that's all right. *[Enter ISHMAEL from R.]*

ISHMAEL.

I want to go home. I want some breakfast. I want my shoes.

BILLY.

*[Rushes to him and leads him to door R.]* Go on in there and stay. It isn't time for you yet.

*[Enter BUB from L. with covered tray.]*

BUB.

Say, is he trying to make a get away again?

ISHMAEL.

You ain't got no right to keep me here.

BILLY.

Here's your breakfast now. Take him in there, Bub, and put him to bed.

BUB.

Come on.

*[BILLY pushes ISHMAEL off at R. BUB exits]*

at R. BILLY stands down R. and reads telegram. NANCY comes down stairs wearing hat.

NANCY.

Was I long?

GENE.

[At the foot of the stairs.] No, you're a wonderful girl.

NANCY.

Wait till you see me on the links.

[Goes out rear L., followed by GENE. Enter MARY down stairs. She comes down C.]

MARY.

Mrs. Gray is better now and she is very anxious to see you.

BILLY.

I'm sorry. I can't see her now. Just got a sudden call to New York.

MARY.

But she is all excited about what you have to tell her.

BILLY.

Tell her that I've found our man.

MARY.

Her husband?

BILLY.

Yes.

MARY.

Oh! After all these years—where is he?

BILLY.

In there.

[*Points to R.*

MARY.

The hermit?

BILLY.

Yes. Bring her down right away, as he is trying to get back to his cave. Break the news to her gently. I've got to be in New York by noon.

MARY.

Can't you see Mrs. Gray?

BILLY.

Haven't time. Bring her down and don't let the hermit get away. I'll be back late to-night.

[*Exit, at R. Enter MISS MATCH from L.*

MISS MATCH.

Who was that?

MARY.

It was Mr. Billy. He's going away.

MISS MATCH.

To New York?

MARY.

Yes. He said he had to be there by noon. I must find Mrs. Gray.

[*Exit, up stairs. Enter BILLY from R., wear-*

*ing aviator's cap and goggles. He is followed by BUB, who carries ISHMAEL'S clothes.*

BILLY.

Come on and help me start. Hurry up!

BUB.

Say, I stole his clothes. I guess he can't escape now.

BILLY.

[Hurries to C. E.] Good boy! Come on.

[Exit, C. E., going to rear L., followed by BUB.]

MISS MATCH.

[Down L.] It worked. It worked. [Triumphantly.] And now we're safe. [Goes to window.] He's off! [Waves her hand.] Good-bye, Mr. Billy, good-bye. [Turns to audience.] Safe! [Speaks grimly.] I think that Mr. Billy is making his last flight! [Crosses to door at L.] His last flight!

[Gives a short, sneering laugh and exits at L.  
Enter MARY down stairs, followed by MRS.  
GRAY.]

MARY.

You must be calm. You can't stand all this excitement.

MRS. GRAY.

[At C.] I will be calm. Oh, where is he? Where is he? I've waited all these years.

ISHMAEL.

[*Outside at R.*] Come back with them clothes!  
Come back, I say! Help, help, thieves!

MRS. GRAY.

That doesn't sound like John's voice.

MARY.

[*At R. C.*] You must be brave.

[*Enter ISHMAEL from R. wearing socks and dressing robe.*]

ISHMAEL.

Where are they? [*Sees ladies.*] Oh!

[*Starts to exit at R., but MARY stands in his way.*]

MARY.

Stop!

ISHMAEL.

What do you mean? Let me go!

MRS. GRAY.

[*Moves close to him, looks at him intently.*] It's a mistake—it's all a mistake.

ISHMAEL.

You let me alone.

[*Exit, at R.*]

MARY.

[*After a pause, goes to MRS. GRAY, who is almost about to faint.*] That was not the man?

MRS. GRAY.

No. I never saw that man before yesterday. It's all a mistake.

[MARY takes her in her arms and MRS. GRAY sobs on her shoulder.]

**CURTAIN**

## ACT IV

SCENE.—*The same as before. Time, an afternoon a few days later. Lights on full as in Act III.*

*At the rise of the curtain MARY is discovered seated  
L. C. talking to KITTIE, who stands at L.*

MARY.

When they come, Kittie, you may put them in the third floor rooms.

KITTIE.

Yas'm. Say, Miss Mary, our hotel shore am doin' a good business.

MARY.

Yes, it's nearly full now.

KITTIE.

How long is dat old man in dere [*points to R.*] gwine to stay?

MARY.

Mr. Billy told us to keep him here until he came back. He thought he was Mrs. Gray's husband but he was mistaken. I can't see any use of keeping him any longer.

KITTIE.

No'm, I can't neither. He was crazy to leave the first day but for de las' two or three days he

seems right contented. And eat! honest, I never saw a mortal man eat so much like he does, 'less'n it's dat chile Aggie Borden, and she hain't a man.

MARY.

Be sure and give the third floor a good cleaning, Kittie. Bub will help you.

KITTIE.

Yas'm, dat's jes' what I'z aimin' to do. [*Crosses to door* L.] How long is Miss Mabel gwine to be away?

MARY.

I got a letter from her this morning. She'll probably be back this afternoon and her husband will be with her.

KITTIE.

Ain't it magnanimous dat she's located her husband after all dese years? She ain't seen him fer nearly twenty-five years and has been lookin' fer him all dat time. And I'z had three husbands in de las' six years and am now on de lookout for Number Four. Dis yere bein' a unattached widow lady is powerful lonesome, Miss Mary, powerful lonesome. Looks like Miss Mabel never could recognize her man after all dese years. I'z plumb forgot what my first one looked like, 'cept dat he was a kinda cinnamon colored, no-count coon from Memphis.

MARY.

You arranged Number Six for Mr. Gray, didn't you?



KITTIE.

Yas'm, it's all arranged. I wonder how come Miss Mabel to know where her husband was located at.

MARY.

The Ryan Detective Agency located him on a small island in the St. Lawrence. They wrote to Mrs. Gray and she went there at once. Then she sent me a telegram that the search was at an end.

KITTIE.

I'm powerful glad. Do you reckon she's satisfied wif him, now she's got him?

MARY.

Her letter this morning said she was the happiest woman in the world.

KITTIE.

Dat shore is nice. I don't blame her one bit. [*Long sigh.*] Lawsy, I wisht I was a married lady once more. I'm gwine clean up dat third floor now.

[*Exit, L. Enter MISS MATCH down stairs from rear R.*]

MISS MATCH.

I have everything packed up.

MARY.

You expect to catch the evening train?

MISS MATCH.

Yes. I'll write to you when I get to Canada.

MARY.

You are sure you can get over the border?

MISS MATCH.

Sure? There's nothing to be afraid of now.

MARY.

The Ryan agency doesn't usually give up. I can't understand it at all.

MISS MATCH.

I don't worry. I got rid of one of their men and I think I'm able to get away.

MARY.

Got rid of one? You mean Mr. Billy.

MISS MATCH.

Yes, I mean Mr. Billy.

MARY.

Where is he? [*Pause; MISS MATCH looks at her in a tantalizing manner. MARY grasps her arm.*] Where is he? What has happened to him? I have heard nothing from him for four days. Where is he?

MISS MATCH.

You'll never hear from him again.

MARY.

[*Alarmed.*] You mean —

MISS MATCH.

I mean that he fell into my trap.

MARY.

How?

MISS MATCH.

I made a copy of that first code message he received. I worked it out and learned that he was after Getaway Bell. That was his real purpose here.

MARY.

Well?

MISS MATCH.

You remember the morning he went away? I went to the village early that morning and sent him another message in the same code. It was a decoy calling him to New York.

MARY.

Where in New York? [*Looks at her; pause; MISS MATCH is silent.*] Tell me! I've got to know. [*Grabs MISS MATCH and forces her to her knees, MARY's hands around her neck.*] He's disappeared. Where is he? Tell me! Where is he?  
[*Chokes her.*]

MISS MATCH.

Don't! don't!

MARY.

I won't let you go. I'll turn you over to the police. I'll go to prison myself. Tell me where he is!

MISS MATCH.

I don't know.

MARY.

You can't deceive me any longer. You sent him a decoy telegram. It called him to New York. Where is he?

MISS MATCH.

The letter told him to go to the rear of Donovan's place.

MARY.

[*Releases her; staggers back in terror; speaks in a whisper.*] Where Croak is hiding? [*Pause; then in horror.*] And he's disappeared. [*Whispers.*] Croak has killed him.

MISS MATCH.

Maybe he got away.

MARY.

Croak has killed him. Oh, I know Croak McGowan. He's killed him.

MISS MATCH.

Then come with me to-night. You can make a new start in Canada. We'll get over the border and everything will be all right. [*Pause.*] Why don't you say something? You'll go with me?

MARY.

No! I'll go to New York. I'll find out the truth. And if Croak McGowan has killed the man I love I'll send him to the chair [*turns to MISS MATCH savagely*], and I'll send you to the chair!

MISS MATCH.

Bell!

MARY.

Don't call me Bell. I'm Mary Blake and I've always been Mary Blake. You are Getaway Bell.

[ISHMAEL appears at door, R., and listens unobserved.]

MISS MATCH.

The police have your record. They have your picture and beneath it is the name of Bell Summers.

MARY.

I'll tell them the truth, and they'll know it's so because they'll see it in my face. I'll tell them how you used the name of Getaway Bell for me to shield yourself from the consequences of your own crimes. Oh, you worked your game cleverly enough with your false clues and your bits of evidence to make the police think that I was the criminal. But it's gone too far, it's all gone too far. I'm going to tell them the truth.

MISS MATCH.

Tell them what you like. They'll recognize your picture, they'll look up your record—then who will believe you?

ISHMAEL.

I will.

MISS MATCH.

What!

MARY.

The hermit!

ISHMAEL.

That's what you folks call me, but in New York I'm generally known as Cornelius Ryan.

MISS MATCH.

You've nothing on me. There is the woman you're after. There is Getaway Bell.

[Points to MARY.]

ISHMAEL.

So I heard you say, but I rather think Getaway Bell will get away, just as she's always done. [Takes MISS MATCH's arm.] The woman I am after is Lizzie McGowan, the wife of Croak McGowan, who was caught last night in the rear of Donovan's place in New York.

MISS MATCH.

Croak caught? It isn't true. It's a frame-up.

ISHMAEL.

The district attorney's flivver is outside, Liz. You and I are going to take a little joy-ride down to the village and catch the evening train for New York. The game is up.

MARY.

Tell me what has become of Mr. Billy.

ISHMAEL.

Well, he's made a pretty good showing for himself down in the city. He captured Croak McGowan. [Laughs.] But I fooled him. He's from our Denver agency and had never seen me. They sent him here to find Mrs. Gray's husband and we

gave him a tip that Getaway Bell was in this part of the country. But I thought I might be of some help to the lad, so when I saw his air-ship headed over the mountain I just topples into the stream and let him pick me out.

MARY.

Then he is safe?

ISHMAEL.

Well, I don't know as you'd call it safe. There's something the matter with him.

MARY.

What is it?

ISHMAEL.

Love, I reckon. I thought at first you were the real crook, Miss Blake, and I wanted to test the boy. That's why I hid outside in the shadows of the trees the night we came here. That's why I slept in front of the fire and nearly gave myself the rheumatism. But the lad's true blue and has covered himself with glory. He ought to be here now.

[MISS MATCH *slowly and stealthily crosses to window.*

MARY.

He's coming here?

ISHMAEL.

Well, I reckon all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't keep him away from you. Come away from that window, Lizzie; you're liable to catch cold. Mary, just run up-stairs and bring down Lizzie's hat and coat. And you might bring

down that pack of Liberty Bonds. She's got it hid behind a piece of loose wall paper back of her bed. She won't need Liberty Bonds where she's going. [*Exit MARY up stairs at rear R.*] You might as well sit down, Lizzie, and be comfortable.

MISS MATCH.

[*Panting in a terrible rage.*] You—you!

ISHMAEL.

Sit down and catch your breath. I've been waiting for this little flirtation for a long time. Ever since you began to shift the blame of all your little acts to Getaway Bell. Yes, the Ryan Detective Agency has had its eye on you for some time.

MISS MATCH.

How did you find me out?

ISHMAEL.

That's right, talk and be sociable. Well, here's where you made your little slip-up. We knew that Getaway Bell was in France as a nurse and yet the so-called Getaway Bell robberies went on just the same. We just put one and one together and made two; you were one and Croak was one, and that solved the whole thing.

[*Enter BILLY from C. E., coming from rear L.*

BILLY.

[*Coming to ISHMAEL and shaking hands with him.*] Mr. Ryan, I'm ashamed of myself.

ISHMAEL.

Why? We all make mistakes sometimes, even the youngest of us.



BILLY.

I could have sworn you were the missing John Gray.

ISHMAEL.

Oh, no. The missing John Gray was located a week before you came here. He was in the Cumberland Mountains and answered our advertisement for him. He thought his wife had been dead for years and was almost overcome when he learned of her long, long years of suffering.

BILLY.

[*Looks at Miss MATCH.*] Good-afternoon, Lizzie. Your husband is in the Tombs. He sent you his kindest regards. Where are all the folks?

ISHMAEL.

On a picnic up at Sunset Rock.

BILLY.

[*Disappointed.*] Oh!

[*Enter MARY down stairs with coat and hat and grip.*]

MARY.

[*Drops things at foot of the stairs and goes to BILLY with a glad cry.*] You're safe?

BILLY.

Safe and sound as a new-laid egg.

ISHMAEL.

Lizzie, I'm afraid we are intruding. The flivver awaits. Are you ready?

MISS MATCH.

[To MARY.] You'll do what you can for me, won't you?

MARY.

Yes, I'll do what I can.

MISS MATCH.

And, Mary, go straight. You got your big chance now. Take it, girl, go straight. I never had the chance. [*Changes tone.*] All right, Mr. Cornelius Ryan, let's be starting. [*Crosses to C. E. with him.*]

ISHMAEL.

Well, good luck, Billy. I'll see you at the office to-morrow.

BILLY.

All right, Mr. Ryan.

ISHMAEL.

Good-bye, Mary. He's a fine fellow. He fished me out of the river. [*Laughs.*] And he never suspected that I was his boss.

[*Exit, C. E. and out rear L., with MISS MATCH. Soft music: Chorus of "Long, Long Trail."*]

BILLY.

You've changed your mind about some things, haven't you, Mary?

MARY.

Yes.

BILLY.

You said over there in France that we could only be friends.

MARY.

There's a long, long night of waiting until our dreams all come true.

BILLY.

[*Takes her in his arms.*] But now I will be going down the long, long trail with you.

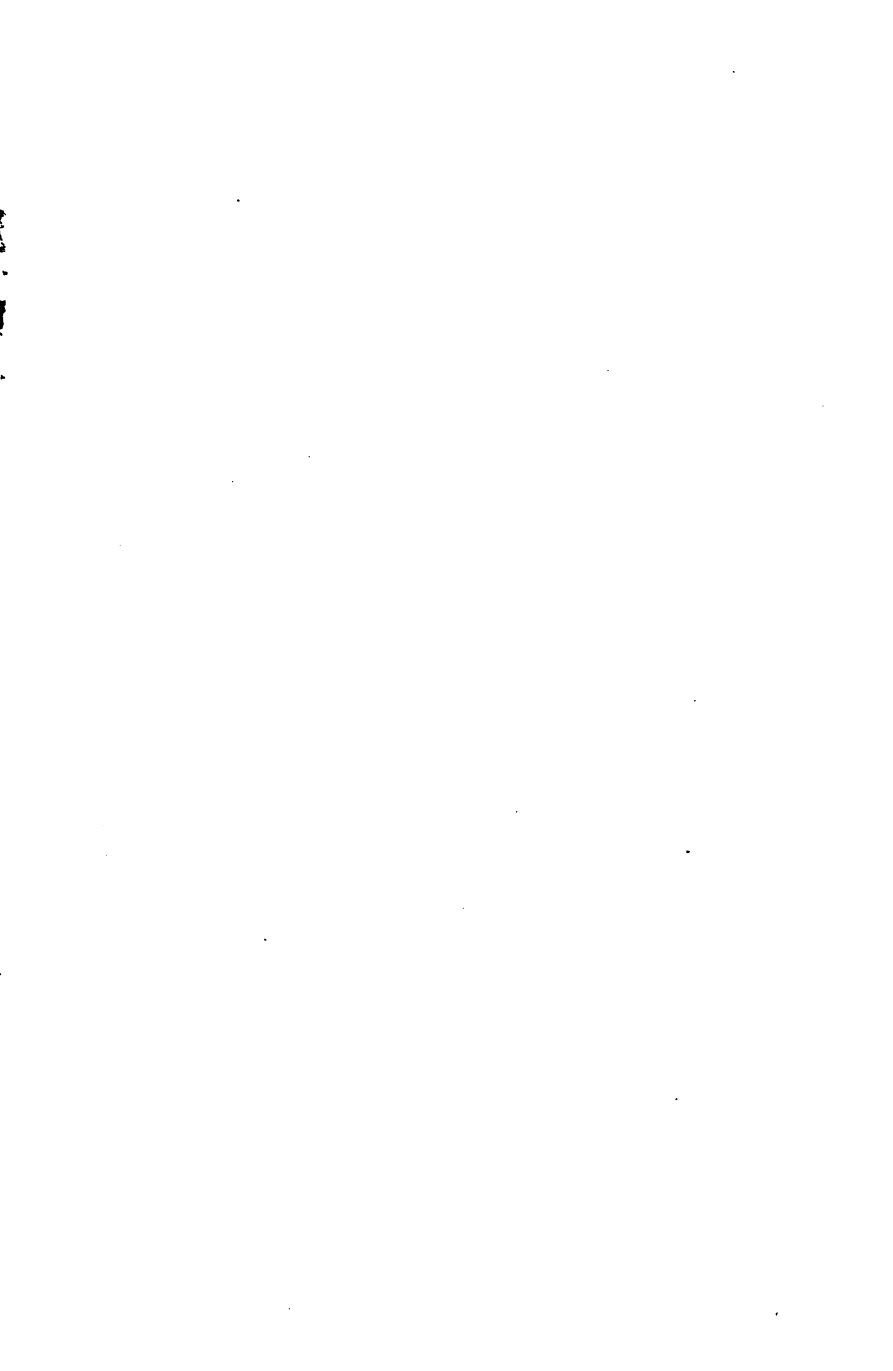
[*KITTIE appears in door at L., carrying tray of dishes. She sees them, drops the tray and throws up her arms.*

KITTIE.

For de land sakes! Excuse me. I knows how it is maself. Jest please kindly excuse me!

[*She exits at L. MARY and BILLY pay no attention to KITTIE'S interruption.*

CURTAIN.





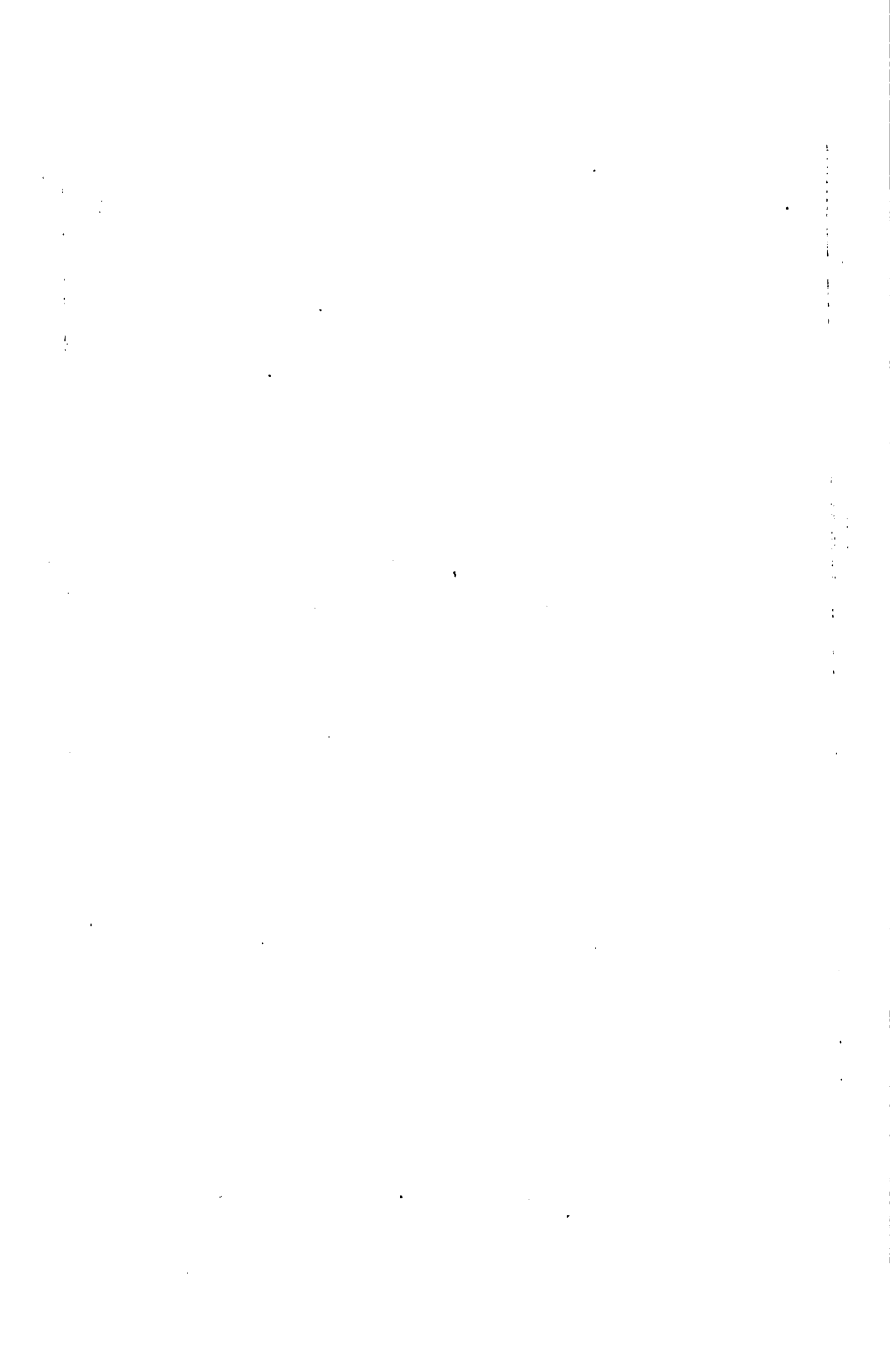
**J. C. McMULLEN**

# **BY GEORGE!**



**A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS**

**Walter H. Baker Company, Boston**



# BY GEORGE!

A Comedy in Three Acts

By

J. C. McMULLEN

*Author of "The Rebellion of Youth," "All for Charity,"  
"Making Daddy Behave," "Getting Acquainted with Madge,"  
"When a Feller Needs a Friend," "Turning the Trick,"  
"Wives to Burn," "The Boob," "The Show Actress,"  
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BOSTON  
WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY  
1925



# By George!

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## CHARACTERS

GEORGE BRACKTON, *the host.*

MARGARET BRACKTON, *the hostess.*

DAVID DELMAR

AMELIA DELMAR

HUGH DELMAR

ROBERT JONES

ROSANNE MARKLE

GERTRUDE WORDEN

BARTLEY CARSON

INEZ CARSON

GERALDINE, *the maid.*

CHING LEE, *the servant.*

JOHNSON, *the police officer.*

} *the invited guests.*

} *the uninvited guests.*

TIME. The present.

PLACE. Living-room of the Brackton home, Southern California.

ACT I. Early morning.

ACT II. 10:00 A. M., the next morning.

ACT III. Five hours later.



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F. E. CHASE FUND

**FEB 27 1945**

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

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### SCENE

Stage is arranged as the living-room of the Brackton home. Door L. and door L. c. back, opening to hall, leading off L. This door is designated as c. d. in the play. French windows R. c. back, opening to garden. Garden seat outside window, visible to audience. Stairs, with landing, leading off R. Divan, facing the footlights squarely, is placed L. c., about one-third of the way back on stage from footlights. Small table with books and ash-tray against back of divan. Large easy chair R. c. Other furniture added as desired.

### CHARACTERS

George, Margaret, David, Robert, Rosanne, Bartley and Inez, are men and women in their middle forties. They should not, however, be played as quiet, settled, middle-age characters, but rather as quick, alert, up-to-date people, still in possession of their youth.

Amelia should show her age. She is one of those morose, would-be pathetic hypochondriacs, who is miserable herself and intends seeing that all around her are in the same condition.

Hugh and Gertrude are about twenty-two.

Geraldine, the maid, is about twenty-one. She dresses in the regulation maid's costume.

Johnson, the police officer, is about thirty, quick and direct in his speech and actions. Wears dark business suit.

Ching Lee, the Chinese servant, age about fifty, wears Chinese houseboy's costume with white apron. Does not wear the cue.

# By George!

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## ACT I

SCENE.—*Living-room of the Brackton home, early morning.*

*(Curtain rises with ROSANNE sitting R. C., MARGARET standing in window looking off R. Burst of laughter is heard off R.)*

MARGARET. I do hope they will be congenial.

ROSANNE. Did you ever, in all your life, see such a change in any person as there is in Amelia?

MARGARET *(still looking off R.)*. I have been planning on this for months and I am so anxious to make it a success.

ROSANNE. She is so self-centered that she doesn't know anyone exists but Amelia Delmar.

*(Another burst of laughter off R.)*

MARGARET. They seem to be in a good humor, for so early in the morning.

ROSANNE *(impatiently)*. Oh, come here and forget them. I want to talk to you.

MARGARET *(down c.)*. What do you want to talk about?

ROSANNE. Amelia!

MARGARET. She *has* changed, hasn't she?

*(Sits on divan.)*

ROSANNE. *Changed!* One wouldn't know she was the same girl we knew at college.

MARGARET. She isn't; she's twenty-five years older.

ROSANNE. Did you ever see such an exhibition of bad temper as she displayed with her husband when they arrived last night?

MARGARET. But she was tired, Rosanne.

ROSANNE. She could have acted the lady even though she was tired.

MARGARET. You are *so* plain spoken!

ROSANNE. Why shouldn't I be? In the first place, I don't believe in thinking one thing and saying another and in the second place, I'm in such a position in life that I can afford to say exactly what I think.

MARGARET. Luckily for you. The rest of us are not so fortunate.

ROSANNE. Whatever possessed you to have such a party as this?

MARGARET. When we built this house, George suggested a house-warming.

ROSANNE. Of course!

MARGARET. But I thought that if instead of a house-warming, we have a house-party, we could have a reunion of our old college friends.

ROSANNE. After twenty-five years? Brave woman! Did you never stop to think that the friends of twenty-five years ago sometimes appear to a disadvantage in the light of later years?

MARGARET. No, that never crossed my mind and I am quite sure George never thought of it either. George agreed to my suggestion, although not very willingly, and we began deciding who we should ask. We didn't want too large a crowd so I picked you and Amelia, while George asked David, Amelia's husband, and another friend, Robert Jones. Then I thought it would be nice to ask Ruth's girl, Gertrude, so I included her.

ROSANNE. Poor Ruth! It hardly seems possible she has been dead for fifteen years.

MARGARET. No, it doesn't. I have never seen Gertrude but I know Ruth didn't leave her much so I thought it would be a nice vacation trip for the child. Then I've been wanting to see her for ages. She always writes to

me as her "Aunt Margaret" and I have really quite an attachment for her.

ROSANNE. I'm "Aunt Rosanne" to her too, although my correspondence with her has been rather limited.

MARGARET. George wanted to ask another friend of his, Bartley Carson, but he hasn't kept very close touch of him lately, in fact, I don't think has seen him for years, and when he went to look him up, he found he had, to put it plainly, some sort of a police record back of him, so we omitted him from our list, although I think George really cared more for him than any of the others.

ROSANNE. In what sort of business is Mr. Jones engaged?

MARGARET. I don't just know. I heard George say he inherited a small brewing establishment from his father, but what he has done with it since prohibition became a law, I can't say. I understand he was in government service of some kind during the War.

ROSANNE. He seems like a very fine man, although sort of abstracted or worried.

MARGARET. I have noticed that; also that he has been paying you considerable attention during the past week.

ROSANNE. I enjoy clashing swords with a woman hater, which a man his age and unmarried must surely be.

(DAVID and AMELIA enter from window and go down c.)

DAVID. I was out in the garden, robbing your orange tree, Mrs. Brackton. Those you served at breakfast weren't enough. It's worth living in California to have oranges like you have for breakfast.

MARGARET. They are nice. Are the others coming in?

DAVID. No! They went down to the rose garden.

AMELIA. They wanted me to go, too, but I told them it was a little too early for me to do much walking. I always rest for a while after breakfast. My nerves, you know.

MARGARET (*rising*). You had a trying trip; perhaps a rest will help you. Come, Rosanne! We will join the others in the garden. [*Exits window with ROSANNE.*]

DAVID (*looking around*). George has a fine place here.

AMELIA (*sitting R. C.*). I do wish they hadn't had oranges for breakfast. I just know they won't agree with me.

DAVID. What did you eat them for?

AMELIA (*petulantly*). David! How *can* you say such things! I *must* eat something.

DAVID (*sitting on divan*). I enjoyed that trip across the continent. It has been many a long day since I have had a full week's rest like that.

AMELIA. David! How *can* you say you enjoyed that ride? It was hot and dusty and across that awful desert—it just about killed me.

DAVID. Some day I am going to get a place in California. I believe I would like it out here.

AMELIA. Oh, David! How *can* you *think* of settling in such a place? In my state of health I just *couldn't* think of being so far from dear Dr. Johns and I know *he* would never come out here.

DAVID (*seriously*). Amelia! Don't you suppose I ever get tired hearing of Dr. Johns? I get him for breakfast, dinner and supper. If you want my honest opinion, I think you would be all the better if you were far away from this paragon of the medical profession, this wonderful Dr. Johns.

AMELIA. Oh, David! How *can* you speak so? You *know* the state of my nerves. And after that long and tiresome ride too. (*HUGH appears in window.*) Hughie, darling! Father spoke harshly to mother when he *knows* he shouldn't. He knows when he speaks harshly to her it always brings on one of her raging headaches.

HUGH (*glancing from father to mother as he goes down C.*). Mother! I think —

AMELIA (*pleadingly*). Don't, darling! Don't *you* speak harshly to mother! Mother's nerves are just now about the breaking point. Sometimes, darling, I think mother can't stand this bickering and faultfinding and continual grind of poverty.

DAVID. Poverty? Why bring that subject up, Amelia?

HUGH. You shouldn't speak like that, mother. We are not rich but we are far from being paupers.

AMELIA. Oh, Hugh! How can you speak like that to me! No, we are not paupers, but your father has been *such* a failure in life that —

DAVID. Please, Amelia —

AMELIA (*going ahead*). I am about ready to give up. I have struggled and struggled and struggled, trying so hard to make things a success and then to come here and see all the Bracktons have and to know that your father could just as easily have had as much had he *tried*. Oh, Hughie, darling! There are times when I think my cross is more than I can bear.

(*Places handkerchief to her eyes, bows her head and sobs. DAVID and HUGH glance at each other with resigned expression on their faces.*)

DAVID. I have tried, at least, Amelia. Possibly I haven't made the success in life that George has but I *have* tried.

AMELIA. Possibly? Oh, David! How can you even use that word "possibly"? You *know* you haven't made a success of life and how I have struggled and struggled and —

DAVID. Perhaps if I sell my play —

AMELIA. Sell your play? Oh, David, dear! Why *will* you base such hopes on that foolish play? No one would ever produce a play that *you* wrote, David. Now, Hugh, darling! Help mother to her room. (*Reaches her hand to HUGH.*) When I think of all my worries and how I have struggled and struggled and struggled, it seems a mountain is pressing me down, down, *down*! Come, darling!

(*She rises with HUGH's help and, crying softly, exits stairs on HUGH's arm. DAVID watches them off and then sits for a moment, in thought. He rises as GEORGE and ROBERT enter from garden.*)

GEORGE. Hello, Dave! Had a good breakfast?

DAVID. Fine! Couldn't have been better! Glad to see you so well fixed, George.



ROBERT. Isn't he though! This place surely looks good to me.

DAVID (*turning and looking ROBERT over for an instant*). Do you know, Bob, you don't seem at all like the old Bob of twenty-five years ago.

ROBERT. I'm not, old man. I have several grey hairs and —

DAVID. Yes, I know, we all have, but don't you notice a change, George?

GEORGE. Business worries, I suppose. Eh, Bob?

DAVID. It seems a little odd to me to be visiting in a place like this after plugging along in the same old rut like I have, year after year.

GEORGE. What are you doing, Dave? (*Sitting R. c.*)

DAVID. Still secretary to the president of the L. J. & H. Railroad, same job I took when I left college, and I'm hardly a dollar richer than I was when I took it.

GEORGE. You have a son, Dave, something neither Bob nor I possess.

DAVID. Yes, I have Hugh and he is a fine boy. I was speaking of money. Take this place, for instance. I wouldn't know how to act if I had such a home.

GEORGE. I *have* things nice. We are not exactly wealthy but we could clean up for a couple hundred thousand. Never would have made it only for Margaret. That woman is a wonder, boys. She has worked right along with me.

ROBERT. That is the kind of a wife I want, one that will work right along with me, or better still, one that *has* worked and made her pile.

GEORGE (*laughing*). Better set your cap for Rosanne, Bob. She's worth quite a tidy little sum.

ROBERT (*sitting on divan with DAVID*). Worth a tidy little sum, is she? That's the kind of a wife I'm looking for.

GEORGE. As though you haven't had plenty of opportunities of getting married had you wanted to.

DAVID. How did you make your money, George?

GEORGE. Real estate; everybody does in California. Margaret could sell bit for bit with me. Has a good

business head on her, too. She saw this place for sale and insisted that I buy it, which I did against my own better judgment, I'll confess, but she was right. I could double my money on it any day.

DAVID. She never developed nerves or any of the other little foibles women are so fond of?

GEORGE. Never had time; always kept too busy.

DAVID. You're in luck. (*Slight pause.*) I like your wife, George.

GEORGE. Thanks!

ROBERT. A little hard to suit if you didn't like her. She has that perfect gift of making a fellow feel right at home. I've been here four days and *know*.

DAVID. She is quite different in her disposition from Amelia. She,—er — Who is Miss Markle, George?

GEORGE. Who is Miss Markle? Do you mean to say you haven't heard of the great Rosanne?

DAVID. O-o-o-oh! Is she the great Rosanne Markle?

GEORGE. She is indeed. She and Margaret have been friends since their school-days.

DAVID. I thought her face was familiar.

(*Crosses to window and stands looking out into garden.*)

ROBERT. I never expected to be visiting in the same house with Rosanne Markle.

DAVID (*still at window*). She is surely a beautiful woman.

ROBERT (*crosses to window and looks out, over DAVID's shoulder*). I agree with you, Dave, she surely is. I'm a great admirer of beautiful women, particularly when they are rich. See you later. [*Exits window.*]

(*GEORGE rises and goes to window, where he and DAVID stand looking off R. for a moment.*)

GEORGE. Bob has been greatly taken with Rosanne.

DAVID. He seems worried about something. He don't seem like the old Bob we knew.

(*They resume their seats.*)

GEORGE. What is he doing, now that the country has gone dry?

DAVID. Still in Government service, I believe. The brewery his father ran was not a very large establishment and being located in a small, out-of-the-way town, very little could be done with it when it had to be closed down. I understand he was rather indignant about the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment. Claimed it was pure confiscation.

GEORGE. He would soon get over that. What does your son follow, Dave?

DAVID. He is with a brokerage firm at present. I'm glad you included him in your invitation, George, as I am a little worried about him.

GEORGE. A little wild?

DAVID. No, he just seems to have lost interest in things generally. About two years ago he was in New York on a little business trip for the firm and I had him look up the Carsons. I hadn't heard from them for years and I thought I would like to get in touch with Bart again. He found them all right and, as the saying goes to-day, developed quite a "case" on Bart's daughter. It pleased me and again it didn't as I had heard some rather peculiar stories about Bart. Anyway, about a year ago the young lady suddenly disappeared. She wrote Hugh a note that she could never marry him and asked that he make no effort to locate her. It broke him up pretty badly and he has never been the same boy since.

GEORGE. When did you see Bart last, Dave?

DAVID. A number of years ago. As I say, I haven't kept in very close touch with him but since the girl disappeared I made a few inquiries and I find that he and his wife have anything but an enviable record with the police.

GEORGE (*after a slight pause*). I know you well enough, Dave, to know you are sure of yourself or you wouldn't make such an assertion.

DAVID. I am. He is in some kind of shady business, just what I don't know. For years he has been con-

tinually moving from place to place and from what I know now, I believe it is to keep clear of the police.

GEORGE. I've noticed his moving around. Every letter I have sent him in the past ten years has been sent to a different address. What sort of a wife has he?

DAVID. A very fine woman, seemingly, quiet, reserved and a thorough lady. I feel sorry for her. When they left Pittsburgh, I found out afterward, it was due to Bart's connection with some kind of a shady stock deal. In fact, it wasn't the local authorities but the Government that was after him.

GEORGE. Not Bart!

DAVID. Yes, Bart! It surprised me as much as it does you. I felt particularly sorry for his wife, for, as I say, she seems like a thorough lady, but there is something wrong, George, somewhere.

GEORGE. When your son got in touch with them they weren't down and out, were they?

DAVID. Oh, no! They were living in a very nice apartment and were doing very well. The girl's disappearance was a hard blow to Hugh. He has never been the same boy since.

GEORGE. I can't think there is anything wrong with old Bart. I'll admit I had heard some of these stories and we decided not to invite them out with the rest of you but—well, it's hard to believe anything against Bart.

DAVID. It is and no matter what I have heard of him I have been unable to make up my mind that he is actually crooked, yet from what I have found out, his associates from Coast to Coast are convicts, confidence men, oil sharks and such riff-raff.

GEORGE. Not a very enviable reputation.

DAVID. Possibly I shouldn't have said anything about him but I feel a little bitter toward him, in a way, as I hold him responsible for the change in Hugh.

GEORGE. What does your wife think of it?

DAVID (*bitterly*). My wife? You won't be around Amelia long until you find out her one and only thought is Amelia Delmar.

HUGH (*enters stairs*). Mother wants you, Dad.

DAVID (*rising*). Is she feeling better?

HUGH. She is having a severe spell with her stomach.

GEORGE (*rising*). That's too bad. I'll send Margaret to her. Perhaps she can do something for her. [*Exits L.*]

DAVID. Is it real or imagination?

HUGH (*c.*). Two-thirds imagination and one-third oranges. She only ate four for breakfast.

AMELIA (*on landing of stairs*). David! Are you coming? I want you to fan me. How can you be so long when you know I'm feeling so badly? I'm so sick from that orange I ate for breakfast.

DAVID. *That* orange! If I'm not mistaken, you ate four.

AMELIA. Oh, David! How can you say such a thing? Even though I *did* eat four, you surely don't begrudge me the little pleasure I get in eating, do you? Oh, I'm so misunderstood and I feel so badly. Hurry, David! Won't you, dear? [*Exits stairs.*]

HUGH. Better go up, Dad. There'll be a scene shortly if you don't.

DAVID. Hugh! Sometimes I —

AMELIA (*calls from off R.*). David! Will you *ever* get here?

DAVID. I —

(*Turns toward stairs and hesitates a moment.*)

AMELIA (*again calls*). David!

DAVID. Oh, what's the use! [*Exits stairs.*]

(*HUGH turns to go out C. D. and meets GERALDINE who enters door L.*)

HUGH. Gerry!

GERALDINE. Hugh!

HUGH. Oh, Gerry! Why did you go away like you did?

GERALDINE. Hugh! I —

HUGH. That dress! Why are you dressed as the maid?

GERALDINE. Because I *am* Mrs. Brackton's maid.

HUGH. But why?

GERALDINE. It's too long a story to tell you now, Hugh, but I had to go, far away where I wasn't known, where the very name of Carson had never been heard.

HUGH. But what brought you to Los Angeles?

*(Leads GERALDINE to divan where they sit.)*

GERALDINE. It was the farthest place from New York I could go.

HUGH *(puzzled)*. But Gerry! You a maid and here of all places.

GERALDINE. I had to do something and I wanted to be some place where no one would be likely to find me, particularly my parents.

HUGH. But Geraldine! The Bracktons are lifelong friends of your father's.

GERALDINE. The Bracktons are?

HUGH. Your father and Mr. Brackton attended college together. Didn't Mrs. Brackton recognize the name when she hired you?

GERALDINE. I am working under the name of Geraldine Kay. *(Rises and removes her apron.)* I must leave at once. *(Starts for stairs.)*

HUGH *(stopping her)*. No! Just a moment, Gerry! I'm not going to lose you again. Oh, Gerry! When you left so suddenly it—it about broke me up. What was wrong? Was it something I had done?

GERALDINE. No, Hugh!

HUGH. Then what was it?

GERALDINE. I can't tell you; don't ask me.

HUGH. Is there anything I can do?

GERALDINE. No!

HUGH. Why can't you trust me, Gerry?

GERALDINE. I do trust you, Hugh, but this is something I just can't talk about. Now, Hugh, I must go.

*(Again starts for stairs.)*

HUGH *(firmly)*. Geraldine! If you attempt to leave here I shall tell the Bracktons who you are.

GERALDINE *(alarmed)*. No, Hugh! You mustn't do that!

HUGH. I don't intend to lose you again, dear. If it is nothing I have done, and I'm sure it's nothing you have done, why did you run away as you did?

GERALDINE (*nervously*). Please, Hugh! Ask no questions; just let me go.

HUGH. Gerry! I want your promise that you won't attempt to go until you see me again. If you don't give it to me I shall tell Mr. Brackton who you are and I am sure he will detain you until I can get in touch with your father.

GERALDINE (*pleading*). But Hugh —

HUGH (*firmly*). I want your promise, Geraldine; that's all I ask. We will talk the other things over later.

GERALDINE. You won't tell anyone who I am?

HUGH. I'll tell nothing until you give me permission to do so.

GERALDINE (*walks to window and stands with her back to HUGH for an instant. She then goes down to foot of stairs*). I promise! [*Exits stairs.*]

MARGARET (*enters L. with GEORGE*). Do you think I should call the doctor? (*Notices HUGH.*) I am so sorry your mother is ill the day after she arrives.

HUGH. Mother is often indisposed in this way, so don't worry about her, Mrs. Brackton.

MARGARET. I'll go up to her. Perhaps there is something I can do for her. [*Exits stairs.*]

GEORGE (*at table back of divan*). Is this your first visit to California, Hugh?

HUGH (*R. C.*). Yes, it is. (*Slight pause.*) I—er—understand you are an old friend of Bartley Carson, Mr. Brackton?

GEORGE (*pauses an instant before answering*). Yes, I am.

HUGH. Have you kept in very close touch with him lately?

GEORGE. No, I haven't. Why do you ask?

(*MARGARET appears on landing of stairs with AMELIA.*)

HUGH. Oh, there was no particular reason.

[*Exits window.*]

MARGARET. George, dear! Will you ask Rosanne to come in? You will find her in the garden.

GEORGE. Certainly! [*Exits window.*]

MARGARET. Now sit there, dear! (*Sits AMELIA in chair R. C.*) Ching is preparing an orangeade for you; then when Rosanne comes in, we three will have a long talk over the old days. Do you realize, Amelia, that I haven't had a talk with you in over twenty-five years? Just think of the changes that have happened.

(*Standing c.*)

AMELIA (*wearily*). There may have been changes for you, Margaret, but there have been none for me, none for me! It has been the same dreary round from day to day. There have been only two things of importance happened to me in the past twenty-five years. One was when my great-aunt Amelia died and left me this necklace, (*Touches necklace she is wearing.*) and the other was your invitation out here.

(*Enter CHING L. with tray containing two glasses of orangeade.*)

CHING. Allee ledy, Missy Mlagot!

(*Crosses to MARGARET with tray.*)

MARGARET. No, Ching! It is not for me; it's for Mrs. Delmar. She is not feeling well and I thought a cool drink might refresh her.

CHING. For her? (*Nods toward AMELIA.*)

MARGARET. Yes, Ching.

CHING. Glass olangeaid for her?

MARGARET. Certainly, Ching.

CHING (*hesitates a moment*). Allee li!

(*Crosses to AMELIA and holds tray before her. She removes both glasses from the tray. CHING looks very much surprised and as AMELIA drinks from first glass, CHING places tray under his arm and begins counting on fingers.*)

MARGARET. What are you doing, Ching?



CHING. She eat one, two, thlee, foo, olanges for bleakfast. Now she dlink one, (*AMELIA starts on the second glass.*) two glass olangeaid. Pletty soon big stomach ache.

MARGARET (*reprovingly*). Ching!

CHING. Allee li, Missy Mlagot! Me go fixy kitchen!

(*Takes glasses from AMELIA and exits L.*)

MARGARET. Ching is like an old friend to us. He has worked for us for years and when we settled on the ranch he came along to look after us. You must pay no attention to what he said. (*Sits divan.*)

AMELIA. I didn't hear a word the man said, dear. I enjoyed that orange juice so much. Your oranges are so delicious but the pulp I think inflamed my delicate, sensitive stomach. The juice, though, is wonderful. I'll have some more later.

MARGARET. I am glad you enjoy it. We have plenty.

(*ROSANNE appears in window.*)

AMELIA. My health is so bad and David makes such small wages. I need so many, many things for my delicate stomach that we are unable to buy. Sometimes I don't know just which way to turn. I have struggled and struggled and struggled and ——

ROSANNE (*interrupting, as she goes down c.*). I think if you would struggle out of this mire of self-pity in which you are bogged it would be a big help to you.

MARGARET (*reprovingly*). Rosanne!

AMELIA (*sadly*). You too, dear! No one understands me. David doesn't, neither does Hugh, and now I come here and you, one of my oldest friends ——

(*Turns and quietly sobs, with handkerchief to her eyes.*)

ROSANNE (*looks at AMELIA for a moment and turns toward MARGARET with an expression of disgust*). Amelia! (*AMELIA pays no attention to her call. ROSANNE then speaks very sharply.*) Amelia!

AMELIA (*slowly turns toward ROSANNE with a sorrowful expression*). Yes, dear?

ROSANNE. We three have been friends for years, even though neither Margaret nor I have seen you since your marriage. Both of us have noticed a change in your letters recently and now that I have seen you, I don't wonder at the change. You shouldn't permit yourself to get into the state you are.

AMELIA. But my *nerves*!

ROSANNE. Bosh! Nerves are only a state of mind! You are in good health and should ——

AMELIA (*rising indignantly*). Good health? With my delicate stomach and —— (*Sits as though stunned.*) Oh, Rosanne! How *can* you say such a thing! I—I—Margaret, dear. Would you ask the servant to bring me another glass of orange juice? I—I feel rather faint. (*MARGARET turns toward her in amazement at her request. Catches herself and rings bell.*) Oh, if only dear Dr. Johns were here!

(CHING enters L.)

MARGARET. Ching! Prepare another glass of orange juice, please.

CHING. One mo' glass! (*Turns toward AMELIA.*) Too much olange juice no good.

MARGARET. That will do, Ching!

(CHING glares at AMELIA and then exits L.)

ROSANNE. All you have done since you arrived, Amelia, is whine!

AMELIA (*tolerantly*). No, dear! It's not whining. It's ——

ROSANNE (*interrupting her*). Is there anything Margaret or I can do for you?

AMELIA (*pathetically*). No! Nothing! Things look so dismal for me. David is a failure in life and Hugh——

ROSANNE (*sternly*). Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Amelia Delmar! Speaking in such a way of your husband. There is nothing wrong with him. He is a charming and entertaining man.

AMELIA. Oh, he's charming enough, but what good

does that do him? He has tried everything in an effort to make money but has succeeded at nothing. He has even tried writing, but what could *David* write that would amount to anything? He was secretary to the president of the L. J. & H. Railroad when I married him and he is still holding the same position.

MARGARET. Money and position are not everything.

AMELIA. But they help a lot, money particularly, especially when one is ill as I am. (*CHING enters with tray containing one glass of orange juice. He crosses to AMELIA with glass; she takes it and drinks.*) That was so refreshing! (*Replaces glass on tray.*) I think I shall go up-stairs again and lie down. (*Rises.*) I always lie down after breakfast. (*At foot of stairs.*) Margaret! Would you have your *servant* bring me another glass of orange juice in about fifteen minutes? It is so refreshing and I am so tired and weary. (*Goes up steps to landing where she turns to ROSANNE.*) Don't think, dear, I have hard feelings toward you for what you just said. You *thought* you were right, dear.

[*Exits stairs, all on stage staring after her.*]

CHING. Nothe' glass orange juice? Pletty soon upset stomach. Me bling casto' oil! [*Exits L.*]

MARGARET. Did you ever see such a change in a woman?

ROSANNE (*sitting on divan with MARGARET*). No, I never did. Self-pity to the nth degree. Did you notice how she accented that word "servant"? Snob! That's all she is. She has never had a servant to wait on her so she's making use of Ching while she can.

MARGARET. Don't you think, though, you were a little severe?

ROSANNE. Severe! I could shake her until her teeth rattled.

MARGARET. I'm afraid my house-party isn't going to be the most wonderful success in the world. With a hypochondriac up-stairs —

ROSANNE. And a cranky old maid down-stairs.

MARGARET. Things look rather dark for a congenial week.

ROSANNE. That woman needs a lesson to teach her the value of a good husband, money or no money.

MARGARET. I simply can't understand her.

ROSANNE. I can. I have met her type many times. She takes all and gives nothing. David Delmar strikes me as being a slow, easy-going man, living for his wife and son. Money means nothing to him other than supplying the necessary comforts of life. You have been fairly successful in life —

MARGARET. I have?

ROSANNE. Make it George, if you will, same thing in Amelia's eyes, while I am known from Coast to Coast, and she is jealous, just plain jealous and envious. She never stops to think she has something neither of us have.

MARGARET (*softly*). Her son!

ROSANNE. Yes, Hugh. I know how you have always wanted a son, Margaret, and as for me—I would be satisfied with a home, not a "residence" as I have, but a real home. She has both the son and home and is still discontented.

MARGARET. Goodness knows you have had opportunity enough to get married and make a home for yourself, had you wanted to.

ROSANNE. You *think* I have, Margaret, but that is "press agent" talk. (*Slowly.*) No man has ever asked me to be his wife.

MARGARET. Rosanne! I can't believe that.

ROSANNE. Believe it or not, it's a fact, so when I see a woman like Amelia with all I desire and have never had the opportunity of having—I hardly know what I would like to do to her.

MARGARET. There seems nothing you can do.

ROSANNE. Possibly not to her directly, but I'm going to give her husband an interest in life, while he is here, at any rate.

MARGARET. How?

ROSANNE. I don't know just how, unless I "vamp" him.

MARGARET. Oh, Rosanne! You wouldn't do a thing like that!

ROSANNE. Wouldn't I? Perhaps if Amelia sees some one else is interested in her husband, *she* may become interested in him also.

MARGARET (*doubtfully, as she rises and walks to window*). Perhaps, but it's playing with fire.

ROSANNE. Nonsense! It will mean nothing to me and he is too sensible and solid to let it mean anything to him.

MARGARET (*looking out of window*). Rosanne! He's coming up the walk!

ROSANNE (*rising*). He is? You disappear, Margaret, and let me talk to him.

MARGARET (*back at divan*). But Rosanne, I don't like this.

ROSANNE. You don't need to. It's for my amusement, dear, not yours. Now run along! (*Gently forces MARGARET out L. as DAVID enters window. ROSANNE turns after shutting door.*) Why, Mr. Delmar! I was just thinking of you. (L. C.)

DAVID (R. C.). Of me?

ROSANNE. I was just wondering if my intuition is correct. I think I have a great faculty for reading people. Aren't you a writer?

DAVID (*smiling*). A writer! Ask Amelia!

ROSANNE. But aren't you, really?

DAVID. No, I don't think I *really* am, at least I have never been able to impress that fact on the publishers.

ROSANNE. But you write?

DAVID. Oh, I have been dabbling at it for the past ten years.

ROSANNE. Are you working on anything now?

DAVID. No, but I have just finished a play.

ROSANNE (*enthusiastically*). A play! Could I see it? I'm an actress, you know.

DAVID. So Amelia tells me.

ROSANNE. So Amelia tells you? Have you never seen any of my pictures?

DAVID. To tell the truth, Miss Markle, I don't go to the pictures very often.

ROSANNE. Rather a home man, aren't you?

DAVID. Well, yes, I am.

ROSANNE. I think we are kindred spirits. And now about the play; may I see it?

DAVID (*doubtfully*). I hardly think it would interest you.

ROSANNE. Indeed it would! I have always had a desire to go on the speaking stage. Perhaps yours is just the play I have been looking for.

DAVID (*hesitating*). I—er—Amelia doesn't believe much in my ability, so if you will just —

ROSANNE. I'll never mention it to her, I promise you.

DAVID. Hugh and I know it by heart and we think it is going to be a success. Wait! I'll get it for you.

(*Exits stairs. After he goes out ROSANNE crosses to door L. and calls.*)

ROSANNE. Margaret!

(*Short pause.*)

MARGARET (*in doorway*). Yes?

ROSANNE. He's getting his play to show it to me!

MARGARET. Rosanne! I don't like this.

ROSANNE. If the play is good, I'll see that he gets a hearing for it. I have that much influence. Then if I cure Amelia of that ingrown disposition of hers, isn't it worth it?

AMELIA (*enters stairs, on GERALDINE's arm*). Margaret! You forgot to send that orange juice up to me, so I decided to come after it. I feel so miserable! If only dear Dr. Johns were here.

ROSANNE. All you need is a little will power, Amelia.

MARGARET. I'm sorry you are feeling so badly. Perhaps if you did exert your will —

AMELIA (*interrupting*). Oh, I have will power, a strong will power, but my poor body is so ill. (*At chair R. C. Turns arrogantly to GERALDINE.*) Help me sit down!

(*GERALDINE assists her and then stands extreme R.*)

MARGARET. I'll have Ching prepare the drink for you. Is there anything else I can do?

ROSANNE. Of course not! Leave her alone; she'll be all right in a moment.

AMELIA. Oh, Rosanne! You don't understand, no one does! (*Stops for a moment.*) Oh, if I had only not eaten that orange!

ROSANNE. Which one, Amelia?

AMELIA. Now you are making fun of me. Is Hugh here? (*Calls.*) Hugh, darling! Come to mother! She needs you!

MARGARET. I saw Hugh walking toward the foothills a few moments ago.

AMELIA (*excitedly*). In this heat? (*Rises.*) Oh, the poor boy! Send someone after him. Tell him mother needs him! Go to the poor child! He will be ill, I know he will!

ROSANNE (*impatiently*). Hugh is quite old enough to take care of himself and if there is anything you *really* need, we can get it for you.

AMELIA. You speak so harshly, Rosanne. Not at all like the friend of years ago. My head is aching so dreadfully too. I wish I had never come.

ROSANNE (*sharply*). Amelia!

AMELIA (*to MARGARET*). Don't mind me, dear! My head is aching dreadfully and I know it was from the pulp of that orange I ate for breakfast. The juice doesn't bother me. I think I shall go out on the veranda where it is cool. Have Ching bring the orange juice out there. (*Reaches her hand to GERALDINE to help her, but GERALDINE does not notice her.*) Well! Can't you attend to your business? Help me to the veranda!

GERALDINE (*shows a flash of anger but instantly suppresses it. She crosses to AMELIA and helps her*). I beg your pardon!

AMELIA (*to MARGARET, as she goes to window*). It's so hard to get a servant nowadays that really *wants* to work, isn't it, dear? [*Exits window with GERALDINE.*]

MARGARET (*at window looking after AMELIA*). And to think that is our old friend Amelia Langsdale!

ROSANNE. Even her manners are atrocious! If I were her husband I would —

MARGARET. Put up with her, dear, just like he does.

ROSANNE. She nagged him until bedtime last night and has been at it constantly this morning, and the way she spoke to Geraldine. "It's so hard to get a servant nowadays that really wants to work." It's as I told you before, she's nothing but a snob. You take her orange juice to her on the veranda and then bring her in here while her husband and I are deep in conversation. It may give her something to think about.

MARGARET. Really, Rosanne! I —

ROSANNE (*pointing L.*). You do as I told you!

(MARGARET *smiles and exits L.* ROSANNE *takes magazine from table back of divan and is sitting on divan looking at it, when DAVID cautiously enters stairs. He stops on landing and looks around room.*)

DAVID. Has Amelia gone?

ROSANNE. She is out on the veranda with the maid.

DAVID. I dodged her in the hall, as I didn't want to have her see me with the play. She thinks it all foolishness but somehow I think I have hit the mark with it.

(*Removes manuscript from inside coat pocket and hands it to ROSANNE.*)

ROSANNE (*reading title*). "At Dawn's Breaking."  
(*Looking up.*) You have a good title.

DAVID. Do you think so?

ROSANNE. Half the success of a play is in a good title.

DAVID (*sitting beside her*). If I could only get it before one of the big producers.

ROSANNE. I think I can help you with that. (*Looks around.*) Don't you think it close in here? (*Crosses to window and looks out.*) I believe if we sat out on the veranda it would be cooler.

DAVID. Perhaps it would.

(*They exit window, sitting on seat just outside, where they converse. MARGARET enters L. with AMELIA.*)

MARGARET. I thought Rosanne was here.



(*They both turn toward window just as DAVID places his arm on back of seat back of ROSANNE.*)

AMELIA (*gasping*). Well! Talking play, I presume. I hope she enjoys it. I think I will go up-stairs again and lie down. It was foolish of me to come down.

(*Exits stairs with head up. As she goes up-stairs DAVID and ROSANNE rise and stroll off R. MARGARET smiles and turns toward C. D., meeting HUGH in door.*)

HUGH (*excitedly*). Where's Mr. Brackton?

MARGARET. I think he and Mr. Jones are in the garden.

HUGH (*as he goes to window*). I'll see if I can find him! [*Exits window.*]

(*MARGARET crosses to window, puzzled, as GERALDINE enters L.*)

GERALDINE. Mrs. Brackton! There's a machine at the door!

MARGARET (*back c.*). That is nothing to become excited over, Geraldine. It is probably Miss Worden. You knew we were expecting another guest.

GERALDINE. No! It's—Mr. and Mrs. Carson.

MARGARET. Mr. and Mrs. Carson! Are you sure?

GERALDINE. Yes and ——

MARGARET. But we are not expecting them and —— How do you know Mr. and Mrs. Carson?

GERALDINE. I—knew them back East.

MARGARET. Oh! They will probably be glad to see you again.

GERALDINE. But I don't want to see them. There's—there's a policeman with them!

MARGARET. What of that, foolish child!

(*GEORGE enters window with HUGH.*)

GEORGE. Margaret! Bartley Carson and his wife are here.

MARGARET. I understand they are, but we didn't invite them!

GEORGE. But they are here anyway.

MARGARET. But George, they surely wouldn't — Very well, dear. They are friends of yours and we will be glad to make them welcome. I didn't expect them but they are welcome nevertheless.

GEORGE. Miss Worden is with them—in charge of a police officer.

MARGARET. But—what is wrong?

GEORGE. I'll see in a moment. I just came in to prepare you for them. *[Exits C. D.]*

*(GERALDINE goes to window and stands looking off L.)*

HUGH. It was too hot to go far so I came back to the house. I saw the machine, with the Carsons, at the gate. I knew them back in New York and when I found out what was wrong I hurried for Mr. Brackton.

*(GEORGE enters C. D. with BARTLEY, INEZ, GERTRUDE and JOHNSON, JOHNSON holding GERTRUDE by the arm. As they enter GERALDINE steps outside window where she can be seen but is partially hidden from those in room, HUGH standing to the L. of C. D.)*

GEORGE *(L. C. with MARGARET)*. Margaret! This is my old friend, Bartley Carson, and his wife.

MARGARET. We are very glad to welcome you.

*(BARTLEY R. C., INEZ to his R.)*

BARTLEY. Thank you, Mrs. Brackton!

JOHNSON *(C. with GERTRUDE)*. This young woman—

BARTLEY. Just a moment, Officer! *(To MARGARET.)* This young lady got into some difficulties on the train. I overheard a portion of her story and when I found out she was coming to visit you, I accompanied her.

GERTRUDE *(to MARGARET)*. You are Aunt Margaret, I know.

MARGARET. Yes, dear, and —

GERTRUDE *(tearfully)*. Oh, Aunt Margaret! They have accused me of stealing!

JOHNSON. Just a moment, young lady, if you please. *(To GEORGE.)* This is a little irregular, Mr. Brackton,

but I think the circumstances warranted me bringing this girl here. She claims to be a friend of yours.

MARGARET. She is the daughter of a very dear friend, who is dead. She came to California, on my invitation, to spend a month with me.

GERTRUDE. I told them that but they arrested me and brought me here, and, oh, Aunt Margaret, I —

JOHNSON. Now just be quiet for a moment, young lady. (*To MARGARET.*) There was a robbery on the train just after leaving Yuma. One of the passengers lost a bill fold containing \$300 and some diamond shirt studs.

GERTRUDE. And just because —

JOHNSON. If you will let *me* explain, young lady, we can get the affair settled much quicker. (*To MARGARET.*) The man reported his loss to the conductor and I boarded the train some miles out. There were only eight people in the car —

GERTRUDE. And he started right in with me and —

JOHNSON (*angrily*). Another interruption from you, young lady, and I'll send you out to my partner in the machine until I'm through here.

MARGARET (*gently*). Kindly wait until the officer has finished, dear. There has been a mistake made somewhere and the sooner the explanation is made the quicker it can be cleared up.

JOHNSON. That's right, lady. As I say, there were only eight people in the car and everybody agreed to having their baggage searched but this young lady.

GERTRUDE (*indignantly*). Why should I agree to have you messing through all my pretty things?

JOHNSON. I insisted, though, and on going through her grips I found the missing articles.

(MARGARET, *startled, exchanges glances with GEORGE.*)

GERTRUDE. But I have no idea how they got there. The man's berth was next to mine and I suppose in the packing — You know how things get mixed up in a Pullman car, don't you, Aunt Margaret?

JOHNSON. The gentleman declined to press the charge

so there wasn't much for me to do but I decided to bring her here and state the case to see if she really *was* making a visit to you.

GEORGE. Thank you! She is the daughter of one of my wife's friends. If the charge has been dropped, may I ask as a favor that the affair be kept quiet?

JOHNSON. Just as you say. I wouldn't have bothered you when the man refused to press the charge only she had been very sociable with these people. (*Turns and looks BARTLEY and INEZ over.*) They don't have—— (*To BARTLEY.*) Your name is Carson, isn't it?

BARTLEY. Yes.

JOHNSON. I thought so! You're bulletined all over the United States, Carson. If you are going to stay in California I would advise you to walk the straight and narrow. Got your wife with you too? Both of you had better look out. We have plenty of your kind here and are not very anxious for any more. (*To GERTRUDE.*) As for you, young lady, in the future be careful of your associates on the train. (*Walks to c. d. He turns in doorway and faces CARSON.*) I think there is something fishy about this whole business. Good-day! [*Exits c. d.*]

GERTRUDE (*crosses to MARGARET and throws herself in her arms*). Oh, Aunt Margaret! Isn't this terrible?

MARGARET (*soothing her*). There, there, dear! It's all a mistake. I know it! I'm sure Ruth's little girl couldn't be a thief!

GERTRUDE (*shuddering*). That word is *awful*! I wouldn't take anything that isn't my own.

MARGARET. I know you wouldn't, dear. Now let us forget all about it. (*To the CARSONS.*) I want to thank you very much for protecting my little girl.

GERTRUDE. They were so kind to me!

GEORGE (*to BARTLEY*). Did—did you have a nice trip out?

BARTLEY. All but the wind-up. Our friend the policeman seems to have us pretty well tagged.

INEZ. Bartley! I think we had better go to a hotel!

GEORGE. Nonsense! I wouldn't think of such a thing. Bartley is one of my oldest friends.

MARGARET. No indeed, Mrs. Carson. Now that you are here, you must remain. Come with me and I will show you to your room. (*Crosses c. with GERTRUDE.*)

INEZ. You are very kind, Mrs. Brackton, but I think we are intruding.

MARGARET. No indeed! You are just a little upset by all this but a hot bath and a cup of coffee will work wonders. (*To GERTRUDE.*) Come, dear! (*They start for stairs. At foot of stairs MARGARET turns toward GEORGE.*) I will leave Mr. Carson in your hands, George!

[*Exits stairs with GERTRUDE, followed by INEZ.*]

GEORGE (*after a slight pause*). Bart! It's been more than twenty-five years since I last saw you but I believe there is an explanation for that policeman's remarks.

(*Reaches his hand to BARTLEY.*)

BARTLEY (*shaking hands with GEORGE, heartily*). There is, George! I will be only too glad to make it, as soon as I can.

GEORGE. I want to enjoy your stay here and so far as we can, we'll forget all about this.

BARTLEY. Thanks, old man!

GEORGE. Come along! I'll show you up-stairs and after a rest we can talk things over. [*They exit stairs.*]

(*GERALDINE crosses from window to stairs and is standing looking up-stairs when HUGH calls to her from his position at C. D.*)

HUGH. Gerry!

GERALDINE (*turns quickly*). You—you heard what that man said?

HUGH (R. C.). Yes, dear, I heard!

GERALDINE. Now do you understand, Hugh!

HUGH (*amazed*). But Gerry! You don't mean to say that what he said was *true*, do you?

GERALDINE. Oh, Hugh, I don't know! When I wrote you I had just found out about their police record. They had just been arrested in some sort of a counterfeiting scheme when I left. Do you blame me for leaving and not telling anyone where I was going?

HUGH. But no matter what *they* may do, that's not you, Gerry.

GERALDINE. But it's my father and mother, Hugh! Do you think I could marry you, knowing their record?

[*Exits stairs.*]

(HUGH stands irresolute for a moment, then turns and slowly goes out window. Stage is empty for a moment; then MARGARET comes down-stairs and crosses to divan where she seats herself. She sits for a moment with a set expression on her face when GEORGE enters stairs. He goes to table back of divan, lights a cigar, puffs it a couple of times and then speaks.)

GEORGE. Well!

MARGARET (*looking back to him*). Well, what?

GEORGE. You *would* have a house-party!

CURTAIN

## ACT II

*Same scene. 10.00 A. M., next morning.*

*(Curtain rises with MARGARET sitting in chair R. C. with hands in her lap, staring straight before her. She holds this position for a moment, then GEORGE enters through window, smoking. He watches her for an instant then crosses to table back of divan and places his cigar on holder.)*

GEORGE. Anything new developed?

MARGARET *(turning quickly)*. I—er—why, George! You startled me so I couldn't collect my thoughts for a moment.

GEORGE *(sitting on divan)*. You were sitting there gazing so intently before you I thought perhaps you were reading the future.

MARGARET. I wish I could. Had I been able to read the future a month ago——

GEORGE. You wouldn't have been so keen for a house-party at Brackton Manor, eh?

MARGARET. Frankly, I wouldn't have.

GEORGE. We *have* sort of a mess on our hands, haven't we?

MARGARET. To use a little slang, "mess" is right. The worst of it is, I don't know what it is liable to lead to.

GEORGE. Oh, nothing serious. I wouldn't worry my head on that score.

MARGARET. If you are not worrying on *that* score, what are you worrying about?

GEORGE. What I am worrying about is, we have a houseful of guests and can't invite anyone in to meet them. It looks—I hardly know how.

MARGARET. It would look worse if we invited them in and found something had been—— *(Stops suddenly.)*

GEORGE. Stolen. You might as well say it.

MARGARET. George! I can't believe that charge against Ruth's daughter. The poor child has been in bed ever since she arrived. And that policeman's remarks concerning the Carsons. I don't know what to think. Why did they come uninvited?

GEORGE. I don't know. I haven't had an opportunity of talking to Bart yet. He was in the city practically all day yesterday and didn't get home until late last night. Did his wife offer any explanations?

MARGARET. Not a word.

GEORGE. You like them, don't you?

MARGARET. Both of them. But George! That policeman was so positive in his assertion.

GEORGE. Policeman or no policeman. I am waiting for Bart's explanation.

MARGARET. I wish he would hurry and give it. Rosanne told me we couldn't invite friends we hadn't seen for years and find them congenial and I've begun to think she's right. Take Amelia, for instance; when I knew her at Vassar she was one of the dearest girls in school, but now—why, she's almost impossible.

GEORGE. What does she have to say to Rosanne's interest in Dave?

MARGARET (*crossing to divan and sitting beside* GEORGE). George! If you'll never breathe it, I'll tell you something.

GEORGE. All right, cross my heart. (*Crosses heart.*) I'll never breathe it. What is it?

MARGARET (*triumphantly*). Rosanne is acting the way she is with David to teach Amelia a lesson.

GEORGE (*coolly*). I knew that a long time ago.

MARGARET. You did?

GEORGE. I'm not quite a numbskull yet. Don't I know that a woman of Rosanne's type could find little to attract her to old Dave? I had that reasoned out ages ago. Yesterday evening to be exact.

MARGARET. Did you notice how jealous Mr. Jones is over it? Oh, George! Wouldn't it be wonderful if Rosanne was to fall in love with Mr. Jones?



GEORGE. Yes, it *would* be wonderful, wonderful for him to fall in love —

(AMELIA enters stairs excitedly.)

AMELIA. Oh, Margaret! *There* you are!

GEORGE. Yes, she's here all right.

AMELIA. I've just been thinking! (*Standing R. C.*)

GEORGE. About what?

MARGARET (*aside to GEORGE*). George!

AMELIA. I've been thinking of something terrible.

GEORGE (*to MARGARET*). She usually is!

MARGARET (*to GEORGE*). Hush, dear!

(AMELIA has gone to each door in turn and looked out as though looking for listeners. She then goes to chair R. C. where she seats herself.)

AMELIA (*very mysteriously*). I've discovered something!

GEORGE (*with mock interest*). You have? What is it?

AMELIA. Gertrude Worden is not what she's supposed to be!

(GEORGE and MARGARET exchange glances.)

MARGARET. What makes you say that?

AMELIA. Once, a long, long time ago, when Gertrude was still a little girl, I went to see her mother, and *then* Gertrude had ——— hair.

(Mentions opposite color of hair from that of girl playing part of GERTRUDE.)

MARGARET. Possibly she had *then*. Remember that is a good many years ago.

GEORGE. And don't forget styles in hair change. It may be brown to-day and—pink to-morrow.

AMELIA. And another thing; I asked her some questions about her mother and she couldn't answer them.

MARGARET. No wonder! She's too upset to answer questions intelligently now.

AMELIA. I know she's upset and I think she should be, but there's another thing, Margaret. Suppose —

GEORGE. Yes, suppose?

AMELIA. Suppose she *isn't* Ruth's girl Gertrude?

GEORGE (*brusquely*). Nonsense, Mrs. Delmar! What on earth would make you suppose such a foolish thing as that? Of course, she is Gertrude Worden. I will appreciate it very much if you will not repeat to anyone else this ridiculous story.

AMELIA. If you *ask* me *not* to —

GEORGE. I do; both Margaret and myself will appreciate it if you will not mention such a foolish thing to anyone.

(DAVID *appears in window.*)

AMELIA (*rising*). Very well! I am your guest and quite naturally shall do as you ask, but with her affair on the train and that policeman's charges against the Carsons —

DAVID (*coming forward to c.*). Amelia! I thought I asked you to refrain from commenting on that subject.

AMELIA. David! How *can* you speak to me in such a tone? You know the state of my nerves. I have been on edges for the past three days. I haven't slept and I haven't eaten.

DAVID. If your nerves have been on edges any more than usual I haven't particularly noticed it. You are staying in the house too much. Suppose we take a walk down through the pepper trees.

AMELIA. A walk? In this hot sun? Oh, David! How *can* you be so inconsiderate? That's it! There's no one understands me but dear Dr. Johns and he's 3,000 miles away. I—I think I shall go up to my room and lie down until lunch. My nerves are in a terrible state; all jumpy and jaggy. (*At foot of stairs she turns.*) Be sure and call me for lunch, Margaret. [*Exits stairs.*]

DAVID (*embarrassed*). George! I—I'm sorry, but I think we will have to leave for Pittsburgh to-morrow.

MARGARET. To-morrow! I thought you were to stay a month?

DAVID. That was our original intention, Mrs. Brack-

ton, but I received a letter this morning, calling me back to the office, so I think it best that we return.

*(Bows slightly and exits stairs.)*

MARGARET. They'll all go the same way, George, you mark my words if they don't. They'll all have important business in Pittsburgh or New York or — Oh, George! I'll never have another house-party as long as I live!

GEORGE. There, there, little girl! You've been placed in a trying position, but I don't think Dave meant anything. I am inclined to believe he is going to relieve you of the trouble of entertaining that—*(Looks around stage.)* awful wife of his, rather than because of what happened to Gertrude on the train.

MARGARET. Amelia is one of my oldest friends but if I thought that I would be relieved.

GEORGE. I am sure that's it. Has the new girl arrived yet?

MARGARET. No, and Geraldine has remained in her room ever since the Carsons came. She claims she is ill but I don't believe it.

GEORGE. Now Margaret! The girl wouldn't say she was ill if she wasn't.

MARGARET. Then why won't she let me into her room to see her?

GEORGE. Perhaps it is something contagious and she doesn't want you to get it.

MARGARET *(rising, horrified)*. Contagious! That would be the last straw! Imagine the house quarantined with smallpox or diphtheria, with all these quarrelsome people here.

GEORGE *(rising)*. I didn't say she *had* something contagious. I merely said she might have.

MARGARET *(starting for stairs)*. Contagion or not, I'm going up to see her and I'm going in. *(Starts up-stairs.)*

GEORGE. I would be careful, Margaret. We don't want you sick.

*(She exits without answering him. GEORGE stands watching stairs for a moment. ROBERT appears in window.)*

ROBERT. Some wonderful garden you have, old man.

GEORGE. Yes, we have rather a nice place. Got your business in the city attended to?

ROBERT. Yes! Had no trouble whatever. (*Sits R. c.*)

GEORGE (*resuming seat on divan*). What do you follow, Bob?

ROBERT. Stocks, bonds, anything to make the money.

GEORGE (*after a moment's silence*). Bob! When Bart arrived yesterday he was accompanied by an officer.

ROBERT. So I understand.

GEORGE. The officer made some remarks concerning Bart and his wife in a very insulting tone, which neither of them resented. Living in the East as you have, Bob, you have been a little closer to Bart than I. Do you honestly believe there is anything in his life that he need be ashamed of?

ROBERT (*hesitates an instant*). George! Like you, I am an old friend of Bart's. I have heard some things about him that are hard to believe, that he has been traveling in society that you or I would hardly countenance. In fact, I heard his daughter left home on that account.

GEORGE. But it don't seem possible to me that Bart would do anything crooked.

ROBERT. We all have things in our life, George, that are hard to explain. I may be asking you to make excuses for me some day. Changing the subject; is it true that Miss Markle is a wealthy woman?

GEORGE. Rosanne? Indeed she is. She is worth a cool million if not more. She is a very popular actress and has taken care of her money.

ROBERT. She is a wonderful woman. So unaffected.

GEORGE. Yes, she is; with all her wealth and fame. She and Margaret have been friends for years.

ROBERT. She is particularly attractive to a duffer like me with a million or so thrown in.

GEORGE. Such nonsense, Bob, as though you would marry anyone for her money. Why have you never married, Bob?

ROBERT. I was engaged when the crash came, but—you know girls.

GEORGE. Some of them act that way, Bob, not all of them.

ROBERT. This one did. That, with the loss of everything I possessed, has made me a little sour. But what's the use of talking about it? The brewing business was perfectly legitimate when my father was helping build it up. It was licensed and handled under the supervision of the State, but with one sweep, the fruit of all his years of labor was wiped out and I was left—flat! Confiscation! That's all it was!

GEORGE. You could have converted your buildings to other uses!

ROBERT. In Millerton? I might have, had they been located in a city, but not in that small town.

GEORGE. Even so, Bob. While it hit you pretty hard, you are not yet an old man and we must all make way for the public's good. Then you must admit that the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment was one of the greatest blessings that ever befell our country.

ROBERT. I am not discussing the ethics of the case, George, but simply how the law was applied. I made way for the public's good, because I had to, but the public will pay for it, some way. Wait and see. [*Exits window.*]

MARGARET (*hurries down stairs*). George! She's feverish!

GEORGE (*rising*). That's not contagious!

MARGARET. But it might be the forerunner of half a dozen things that are. (R. C.)

GEORGE. At that we could only be kept on the grounds.

MARGARET (*crossing to door L.*). Isn't that enough?

GEORGE. You're nervous, Margaret.

(*Following her to door.*)

MARGARET. How can I help but be? Oh, George! This awful house-party!

(*ROSANNE and DAVID enter stairs in deep conversation.*)

GEORGE and MARGARET quietly exit L. ROSANNE crosses to divan and sits facing R., DAVID sitting beside her with his back to stairs.)

DAVID. You have finished the play?

ROSANNE. Yes, and it is just what I have been looking for.

DAVID. You—you are really in earnest?

ROSANNE. Indeed I am.

DAVID. And what should it be worth?

ROSANNE. Cash or royalties?

DAVID. Whichever would pay the most. (ROSANNE looks inquiringly toward him.) Not that I care so much for myself. The play has been a work of love to me. I've worked on it for the past eight years.

ROSANNE. It reads as though you had.

DAVID. Hugh and I have pored over it many a night when Amelia said we should be in bed. I must tell her about it. (*Rises.*)

ROSANNE. No, wait! Suppose we keep it a secret from her for a little while?

DAVID. But I wanted to tell her —

(AMELIA appears on stairs unseen by DAVID but noticed by ROSANNE.)

ROSANNE (*interrupting*). At least, David, until I lay the play before my manager.

(*Places her hand on his arm.*)

DAVID. Just as you say.

ROSANNE (*rises as AMELIA steps back on stairs*). Isn't this a pleasant morning? Suppose we walk down through the pepper trees. I think there is nothing prettier than the sunlight filtering through the pepper trees. Don't you love it—David? [*They exit window.*]

(AMELIA comes down stairs and crosses to window where she stands looking off R. MARGARET enters L. with bottle of medicine and spoon. AMELIA turns toward her.)

AMELIA (*sneeringly*). I see Rosanne is still as much of a flirt as ever.

MARGARET. A flirt?

AMELIA. You know what I mean, Margaret. If she enjoys men's society so much, it's a wonder she never got married.

MARGARET. Just what do you mean, Amelia?

AMELIA. Oh, don't think for a moment that I *care*, but I do think that knowing the delicate state of my health, if she wants a *man* to show her around the garden she might pick some one other than David.

MARGARET (*laughing*). You mustn't be so suspicious, Amelia. Rosanne means nothing by walking in the garden with your husband.

AMELIA. I'm not suspicious, dear, but when Rosanne has everything, she might at least leave my dear, dear husband alone. [Exit stairs.]

(MARGARET stands for a moment looking after her, then she also starts for stairs, as CHING enters L.)

CHING. Missy Mlagot! You get someone help me makee dinner? No see Geladine two days.

MARGARET. Geraldine is sick, Ching.

CHING. Sick? Too bad.

MARGARET. I am taking her some medicine now. I'm depending on you, Ching, to keep things going for the next two or three days. I will help you all I can.

[Exits stairs.]

(CHING goes around to front of divan and is arranging cushions when ROBERT appears in window. He calls to CHING.)

ROBERT. Ching!

CHING. You want me, huh?

ROBERT. Come here! (CHING crosses to window.) You see that lady down there? (Points off R.)

CHING. Sure! Me see!

ROBERT. You run down and tell her — Let me see! (*Studies a moment.*) Tell her Mrs. Brackton wants to see her here.

CHING. Missy Mlagot just go up-stairs. Geladine sick!

ROBERT (*hands CHING a coin*). Run along, Ching! Hurry!

CHING (*looks at coin*). Fi' dolla'! Me fly!  
[*Exits window.*]

(ROBERT *stands in window watching off R. for a moment. He then hurriedly goes to C. D. and stands in doorway as ROSANNE enters window.*)

ROSANNE. Is there something wrong, Margaret?  
(*Looks around.*) Margaret!

ROBERT (*stepping out*). I sent for you, Rosanne!

ROSANNE. But Ching said ——

ROBERT. Don't blame Ching. He didn't want to carry my message but I paid him to do it.

ROSANNE. But Mr. Jones ——

ROBERT. Couldn't you be induced to call me Bob?

ROSANNE (*smiling*). I might be—Bob! What do you want with me?

ROBERT. What do you see in that man?

ROSANNE. In what man?

ROBERT (*nodding toward garden*). In Dave Delmar!

ROSANNE. He has written a great play and is a wonderful conversationalist.

ROBERT. Oh! (*Slight pause.*) You like a good conversationalist?

ROSANNE. Certainly! Don't you?

ROBERT. It depends. (*Quickly.*) Let's go out in the garden and see what I can do in that line.

ROSANNE (*looks at ROBERT for a moment, smiling*). I believe I'll take a chance on you, but Mr. Delmar is in the garden.

ROBERT. Oh, I know a place he doesn't know exists. Come on.

(*Takes ROSANNE's arm and they exit window, laughing. After a moment CHING appears in window and stands watching off R. for an instant. He then enters room and is back at divan when HUGH enters stairs.*)

HUGH (R. C.). Ching!

CHING. Yes?



HUGH. Ching! Will you do something for me?

CHING. Sure! Me do jobs everybody to-day.

HUGH. You know Geraldine, the maid?

CHING. Yes! Fine gel Geladine!

HUGH (*takes note from his pocket and hands it to CHING*). Will you give her this note and tell her I'll be waiting here or on the veranda until she comes? I must see her, Ching!

CHING. Sure! Me take-um!

(*Stands looking at HUGH, making no effort to move.*)

HUGH (*looks at him for a moment*). Oh! I forgot!

(*Hands CHING coin.*)

CHING. One dolla'! Whew! [*Exits stairs.*]

DAVID (*enters window*). Hugh! I've sold my play!

(*AMELIA appears on stairs.*)

HUGH. You have? To Miss Markle? That's fine, Dad! Shake on it. (*They shake hands.*)

DAVID. She is going to play the leading rôle in it, Hugh. She is a wonderful woman, Hugh. So interesting to talk to.

AMELIA (*coming down stairs*). I have noticed you find her interesting to talk to, David. (*Crosses to divan.*) You never thought of me in that hot room, all alone.

[*HUGH turns and exits window.*]

DAVID. Amelia! Don't let your imagination run away with you. It isn't hot to-day.

AMELIA (*sitting on divan*). Imagination! Oh, David! How can you say such a thing! I am feeling so badly!

DAVID. Amelia! If you would watch —

AMELIA (*raising her hand*). I know what you are going to say, David, dear, but you are wrong. I haven't eaten too much. I was very careful at breakfast this morning. I only had two soft boiled eggs, a few pieces of toast, some marmalade, a grapefruit, a dish of rolled oats, some hot cakes and coffee.

DAVID (*standing R. C.*). Is that *all* you had?

AMELIA. Yes, dear. You know how careful I am of what I eat.

(INEZ enters L.)

DAVID. Amelia! That was a breakfast for a truck driver. (*Notices INEZ.*) Have you rested from your journey yet, Mrs. Carson?

INEZ. I am feeling very good to-day, thank you. (*To AMELIA.*) I trust you are feeling better also, Mrs. Delmar. I have been bothered at times with *my* stomach and —

AMELIA (*eagerly*). Oh, do tell me all about it! Are you an invalid?

INEZ. Hardly an invalid, but my stomach —

AMELIA. Oh, isn't that too bad? Sit down! (*INEZ sits on divan beside AMELIA.*) My heart just goes out to anyone with stomach trouble but I hardly think your case can be as bad as mine, for dear Dr. Johns says *my* stomach is one of the worst he has ever encountered.

DAVID. Amelia! I think Mrs. Carson —

AMELIA (*paying no attention to him*). There are days and *days* and *DAYS* when it is an exertion for me to go to the table (*Firmly.*) but I *always* go and I *always* eat, no matter how hard it is for me, for dear Dr. Johns says I must keep up my strength.

DAVID. Perhaps Mrs. Carson —

AMELIA. And then when I *do* eat I have the most excruciating pains.—Do you ever have excruciating pains in your stomach after eating?

INEZ. At times I have been bothered —

AMELIA. But not like I have been, has she, David? (*DAVID attempts to speak but AMELIA goes ahead without waiting for him.*) Dear Dr. Johns says he never met *anyone* with as interesting a case of stomach trouble as I have. Didn't he, David?

DAVID. I —

AMELIA. Of course an ailing stomach has brought on nervousness and that in turn has affected my heart. There are times when I just faint dead away. Don't I, David?

DAVID. I think —

AMELIA. And when I do faint they have the hardest time reviving me. (*Shakes her head sadly.*) Some time I just *know* I shan't come out of one of my fainting spells, shall I, David? (*He attempts to answer but she goes on.*) I suppose though it is one of my crosses. (*DAVID turns angrily and exits window.*) I knew it was dangerous for me to come so far away from dear Dr. Johns, but David insisted, didn't you, David? (*She pauses and waits for an answer. After an instant she turns.*) Oh, David! How could you leave me? (*To INEZ.*) Isn't it hard, Mrs. Carson, to be so afflicted, especially when you have no one, *no one*, who understands you?

(*Places handkerchief to her eyes and quietly sobs.*)

INEZ (*watches her for an instant with a sarcastic smile*). Can I do anything for you, Mrs. Delmar?

AMELIA. You *might* see dear Mrs. Brackton for me and ask her if I could have a light lunch sent up to my room. Possibly my stomach is empty and that is what is making me feel so badly. I ate *such* a light breakfast. (*Rises.*)

INEZ (*rising*). Gladly! Is there anything in particular you want?

AMELIA (*starting for stairs*). No, nothing. Anything will do. (*Stops.*) You *might* bring me some oranges, though, three or four. They are *so* delicious. (*INEZ starts for door L. and AMELIA again starts for stairs, but stops.*) Tell her I might be able to eat a few pieces of thick toast with some of that delicious orange marmalade she had for breakfast. (*Starts up-stairs as INEZ reaches door L.*) And Mrs. Carson! Tell Margaret, if it isn't *too* much bother, I would like a pot of coffee, with cream. Coffee always settles my nerves. And some French fried potatoes would be nice. Ching does prepare the most delicious French fried potatoes, and thank you *so* much, dear Mrs. Carson. I think I shall go and lie down now. (*At top of stairs, she again turns just as INEZ is passing out door L.*) And Mrs. Carson! You may bring the things to my room. Thank you *so* much! [*Exits stairs.*]

INEZ (*amazed*). Bring them to your —

(*Stops, smiles and exits L. CHING enters stairs; looks around room and then crosses to window and motions to HUGH, outside.*)

CHING. Allee li! She come! (*Crosses to stairs and calls.*) Allee li, Missy! (*Turns to go out door L. and passes HUGH entering window.*) Fine gel, Geladine!  
[*Exits L.*]

(*GERALDINE slowly descends stairs.*)

HUGH (*at foot of stairs*). Geraldine! Have you been ill?

GERALDINE. Slightly, Hugh. Then I have been staying in my room while father and mother —

HUGH (*is leading her to divan, where they seat themselves*). You should see your father and mother at once, dear, and demand an explanation.

GERALDINE. But Hugh! I can't hurt mother.

HUGH. Has she considered your feelings?

GERALDINE. She may have a reason for —

HUGH. A reason for causing you to hang your head in shame because of her actions?

GERALDINE. Don't, Hugh!

HUGH (*contritely*). Forgive me, dear, but it is of you I am thinking. I honor you for your loyalty to your parents but if they are implicated in something dishonorable, marry me. You will then have my name and no one will know anything about you or your family.

GERALDINE (*after a struggle with herself*). Hugh, I'm afraid.

HUGH. You needn't be. No matter what the explanation of your parents' conduct may be, it will never be mentioned between us.

GERALDINE. I appreciate your loyalty, Hugh, deeply, but I can't marry you until this mystery, whatever it is, is cleared up.

HUGH. Then clear it up, Geraldine. It is in your power to find out what it is.

(INEZ enters L. with tray of food. She starts on seeing GERALDINE.)

INEZ. Geraldine!

(Places tray on table back of divan and goes around to right of divan, as GERALDINE crosses to her with arms outstretched.)

GERALDINE. Oh, mother, mother! I—I —

(Sobs on her mother's shoulder.)

INEZ (leading GERALDINE to divan as HUGH goes back to window). Geraldine, dear! You almost broke mother's heart. Why did you go away and tell us nothing? The past year has been like a nightmare to us. We have searched everywhere for you.

GERALDINE (passionately). You ought to know why I left. You ought to know I couldn't stand the knowledge that my father and mother are —

(Stops suddenly, collects herself, then rises and goes to window, standing beside HUGH.)

INEZ. You haven't married Hugh, have you?

HUGH (turning). No! She hasn't! But it isn't because I don't want her to. I have asked her repeatedly but she has refused. I didn't know she was here until I arrived yesterday.

INEZ (to GERALDINE). How did you come to be here, dear?

GERALDINE. When I left New York, I wanted to get as far away from everybody I knew as possible.

INEZ. But why did you come to the Bracktons? Didn't you know they were your father's friends? Didn't they recognize your name?

GERALDINE. I am employed here under the name of Kay.

INEZ. But Geraldine! Why?

GERALDINE. Why! (Goes down R. C.) Because I would rather work as a maid than live as I have for the past few years. I wondered, while at school, why you were always moving from place to place, why you never

told me anything of your business, but I never dreamed it was because of—the police!

*(Turns her back to mother.)*

INEZ. My dear! You don't understand!

GERALDINE *(wearily)*. No, mother! I suppose I don't. There are quite a few things I don't understand. Why are you always going from place to place? Why was Diamond John's place in New York raided and everyone there caught but you and father? How did you escape? Why must I be continually making excuses to myself for my father and mother? Why did you come here with the record you have behind you? Look at the charges of that officer yesterday. There are quite a few things, mother, that I—don't understand.

INEZ. Can't you trust us, dear, and wait?

GERALDINE. I can wait, mother; there seems nothing else to do, but I can't trust—any longer. Much and all as I try.

*(Slowly exits stairs, HUGH and INEZ watching her off.)*

HUGH *(at foot of stairs)*. It's breaking her heart, Mrs. Carson!

INEZ. You would marry her, Hugh, knowing she is the daughter of—of —

HUGH. I would marry her if she were the daughter of a murderer.

INEZ. Mr. Carson and I have been placed in a very peculiar position, Hugh, which I think we will soon be in a position to explain. Until that time, may I ask that you keep to yourself what you know of us?

HUGH. I shall mention nothing, Mrs. Carson, unless I think it is for Geraldine's good. Should that occasion arise, I will make no promises. *[Exits window.]*

INEZ *(crosses to window and is looking off R. when BARTLEY comes down stairs. INEZ meets him at foot of stairs)*. Oh, Bartley! I have just seen Geraldine!

BARTLEY. Geraldine! Where? *(Both R. c.)*

INEZ. She is working here as the maid. She left home because she thinks we are — Oh, Bart! Can't

I tell her? I think fifteen years is enough for any woman and now that you are about to quit——

BARTLEY. Not just yet, Inez. I don't believe it would be wise to do so. I'll see Bob to-day and when that is settled you can tell her everything. Now buck up, little woman!

INEZ (*bravely*). I'll—I'll try!

(*Takes tray from table and starts for stairs.*)

BARTLEY. Let me have that. (*Takes tray from her.*)  
Now what?

(*MARGARET appears on stairs.*)

INEZ. Mrs. Delmar wanted me to bring her a lunch, so I asked Ching to prepare it. I knew you wouldn't mind.

MARGARET (*at foot of stairs*). No indeed. But let me take it. (*Reaches for tray.*)

BARTLEY. No! We are going up-stairs. We will pass it in to Mrs. Delmar. Come, dear!

[*BARTLEY and INEZ exit stairs.*]

(*MARGARET stands c. in deep study for a moment, when ROSANNE enters window and goes down to her right.*)

ROSANNE. What are you studying about now?

MARGARET (*sitting on divan*). I was just talking to that poor child, Gertrude.

ROSANNE (*sitting beside MARGARET*). Forget that poor child and listen to me. Margaret! Bob Jones is one of the most charming men I have ever met.

MARGARET. Oh, Rosanne! Tell me about it!

ROSANNE. Tell *you* about it? He hasn't told *me* anything yet, but he will, Margaret, if I give him half a chance. (*Letting her hands drop in her lap.*) But—here's the odd part of it, I'm afraid.

MARGARET. Afraid? Afraid of what?

ROSANNE. It couldn't be my money, could it, dear?

MARGARET. Of course not. None of George's friends would do a thing like that. Don't worry your head about such silliness. Have you talked to Amelia to-day?

ROSANNE. I tried to but she is furious.

MARGARET. You mean jealous.

ROSANNE. She is both furious and jealous. I think she has learned a little bit of a lesson, but I haven't time to bother with Amelia now. Think, Margaret, of me living to be my age before I met the one man.

MARGARET. What are you going to do about the play?

ROSANNE. You *can* jump from one subject to another, Margaret. Buy it and pay for it of course. If it makes Mr. Delmar any happier, he is welcome to the money.

*(Loud screams heard from up-stairs.)*

MARGARET *(startled)*. What on earth is that?

ROSANNE. It's Amelia, isn't it?

*(They rise, standing in front of divan listening. Screams again heard.)*

MARGARET. It sounds like Amelia.

ROSANNE. Perhaps she has tried to eat another orange.

*(AMELIA appears at head of stairs screaming.)*

DAVID *(hurriedly enters window)*. Amelia! What is wrong?

AMELIA *(moaning and wringing her hands, as she comes down stairs)*. Oh, David! How could you bring me to this dreadful place? How could you?

*(Throws herself in chair R. C., moaning and crying, DAVID standing beside her. GEORGE enters L.)*

GEORGE. What is wrong?

*(Goes down L. of ROSANNE and MARGARET.)*

AMELIA. I've been robbed, that's what is wrong. I knew if I came to this horrible West something dreadful would happen. Dear Dr. Johns told me not to come with my stomach in the condition it is. Now look what has come of it. *(Moans.)* O-h-h-h-h!

DAVID. Amelia! Have a little sense! How could your stomach have anything to do with you being robbed?

AMELIA. Don't speak to me in that tone, David! I've been robbed, I tell you. My diamond necklace is gone!



The one Great-aunt Amelia gave me, and I know who took it.

MARGARET. You know who took it?

AMELIA. Yes, I know who took it. Wasn't that girl Gertrude arrested on the train for stealing? (MARGARET *attempts to speak*.) Oh, I know she is the daughter of my dear dead friend Ruth but the fact remains that the stolen money was found in her luggage. (GERTRUDE *appears on stairs, supported by GERALDINE. All on stage turn and look toward stairs. AMELIA, who has her back to stairs, notices this, and she also turns. GERTRUDE and GERALDINE go down stairs, stopping on last step. They are followed by BARTLEY and INEZ.*.) Well! What did you do with it?

DAVID. Amelia!

AMELIA. I mean it! I know she took it.

GERTRUDE (*crossing to c. with the assistance of GERALDINE, as BARTLEY and INEZ cross to back of divan*). I haven't got your necklace, Mrs. Delmar. I was in your room but I—I entered it by mistake.

GEORGE. If you will drop the matter, Mrs. Delmar, I will gladly reimburse you for the loss of the necklace.

AMELIA (*turning to GEORGE*). Reimburse me! *You!* You *can't* reimburse me. My necklace is worth five thousand dollars. It was given to me by my great-aunt Amelia. (HUGH *appears in window*.)

DAVID. Nonsense, George! We'll say no more about it, and ——— (*Hesitates*.) I think Amelia and I had better leave for home to-night.

AMELIA. Without my necklace? Indeed I won't! I demand that she be searched and I know you will find it.

DAVID (*to GERTRUDE*). You will pardon Mrs. Delmar, Miss Worden. She is in ill-health and has been for sometime. I should not have insisted that she accompany me to California. Come, Amelia!

AMELIA. Oh, David! How *can* you —

DAVID. You will accompany me to our room, Amelia, *if you please*.

(AMELIA *stands, half-crying for an instant, but finally takes DAVID's arm and starts for stairs*.)

AMELIA. It isn't so much the value of the necklace, David, dear, as it is the fact that it should be stolen by the daughter of my friend.

DAVID. *Amelia!*

AMELIA (*as they ascend stairs*). Don't speak to me like that, David! You know it *always* makes me ill.

*(They disappear at head of stairs. There is an awkward silence for a moment.)*

GERTRUDE. She has no right to accuse me of stealing! (*Crosses to chair R. C., GERALDINE seating her comfortably in chair, GERALDINE then standing right of chair.*) After that awful experience on the train yesterday, a shock like this—you don't believe such a foolish thing, do you, Aunt Margaret?

MARGARET. Of course not. Were you in her room, Gertrude?

GERTRUDE. I went in by mistake, didn't I just tell you? When she accused me of stealing it unnerved me so that I almost fainted and only for the maid here, who helped me down, I—— (*Sobs on arm of chair.*)

MARGARET (*crosses to L. of GERTRUDE; places arm around her and draws her to her*). Now don't worry, dear. You have been placed in a very unfortunate position but everything will come out all right, I am sure.

*(HUGH crosses to back of divan where he can have a clear view of GERALDINE.)*

ROSANNE. I suggest you send for an officer.

GERTRUDE (*startled, jerks away from MARGARET, suddenly*). An officer! What for?

ROSANNE (*to GEORGE*). If there has been a robbery in your house, Mr. Brackton, in justice to your guests, I think the matter should be placed in the hands of the police.

*(MARGARET steps back of GERTRUDE's chair, as all on stage, but ROSANNE and HUGH, turn toward GEORGE, awaiting his answer. ROSANNE covertly watches GERTRUDE, while HUGH sees no one but GERALDINE. At the mention of the police GERTRUDE carefully re-*

*moves necklace from bosom of her dress and without taking her eyes from GEORGE'S face, drops the necklace in pocket of GERALDINE'S apron (pocket should be on left side of apron), her action being seen by ROSANNE and HUGH. HUGH starts but ROSANNE makes no sign that she has noticed this.)*

GERTRUDE. I believe you are right, Aunt Rosanne. If there is a thief here, the necklace no doubt will be found on her.

ROSANNE. I know I am right, dear! (*Crosses to GERTRUDE and kneels on left knee in front of her.*) You have cried until your pretty eyes are all wet. Let me have your handkerchief, Geraldine! (*Before GERALDINE can comply with her request, she takes handkerchief and necklace from pocket of apron, dropping the necklace to her lap, from where it slides to floor, GERTRUDE alone noticing this. She then dries GERTRUDE'S eyes with the handkerchief. While she is doing this, GERTRUDE, very carefully, pushes necklace back under chair with her right foot, ROSANNE giving no indication that she sees this.*) You should have remained in your room, dear. Now run back and stay there until the police come.

GERTRUDE. Oh, Aunt Rosanne! How could that dreadful woman be a friend of dear Mama's and accuse me of such a thing?

ROSANNE (*rises from her knee and attempts to assist GERTRUDE from chair*). Come, dear!

GERTRUDE. I would rather stay here.

MARGARET. No, you must go to your room, Gertrude. I don't want you to be ill, and I am sure this excitement will not be good for you.

(*GERTRUDE reluctantly rises and ROSANNE places her arm around her.*)

ROSANNE. Come, dear, I will help you.

[*They slowly exit stairs.*

BARTLEY. We will be in our room, George, if you want us.

[*Exits stairs with INEZ.*

HUGH (*going c.*). There is something I must tell you, Mr. Brackton!

MARGARET. You may go, Geraldine!

(GERALDINE starts L.)

HUGH. No! Let her stay. It concerns her!

GERALDINE. Hugh! Please don't——

HUGH. When the police were mentioned a few moments ago, I saw Miss Worden remove the stolen necklace from her dress and place it in Geraldine's apron pocket.

GERALDINE (*with a startled expression reaches into pocket*). You must be mistaken, Hugh; there is nothing there.

HUGH. I am not mistaken. I saw her do it.

MARGARET. You *saw* her do it?

HUGH. Yes! When Miss Markle spoke of calling the police it evidently scared her and she thought she had better get rid of the jewels so she "planted" them on Geraldine.

GERALDINE. But they are not there?

MARGARET (*suspiciously*). Geraldine! You haven't——

HUGH. Don't, Mrs. Brackton! This young lady is not the girl you think she is. Her right name is Geraldine Carson.

GERALDINE. Oh, Hugh!

GEORGE. Geraldine Carson! You are not Bart's missing daughter, are you?

HUGH. Yes, she is. She is the girl I expect to marry some day.

MARGARET. But why are you here under an assumed name? Why this secrecy? Why have you—— (*Turning to GEORGE.*) Oh, George! If anything more happens here I think I shall go crazy!

(*Drops on divan and places handkerchief to her eyes.*)

GERALDINE. When I found out—about my parents' connection with the police, I left home. All I wanted was to get as far away from New York as possible. I came here and, never having been trained in any particular line, I answered your call for a maid, thinking I would be practically lost in that occupation. I am sorry, Mrs.

Brackton, that I have placed you in an embarrassing position. I shall leave at once. (*Starts toward stairs.*)

GEORGE. No! Just a moment! Do your parents know — But of course they do. They were in the room but a moment ago.

GERALDINE. I was talking to mother about ten minutes ago, and I just spoke to father in the hall before I came down.

GEORGE. Um-humph! (*Studies for an instant.*) Hugh! Take Geraldine out in the garden. I am going to get to the bottom of this thing, the stolen necklace, as well as your affair, Geraldine.

GERALDINE. I would much prefer leaving, Mr. Brackton.

HUGH. No, dear! He is right. It might as well be settled one time as another.

(*GERALDINE hesitates for a moment, then exits window with HUGH.*)

MARGARET. George! Hugh was positive about Gertrude placing that necklace in Geraldine's apron pocket. *Could* it be possible that she is not Ruth's daughter?

GEORGE. It's possible but I hardly think probable.

MARGARET. Are you going to call the police?

GEORGE. Not until I have had a talk with Bart.

MARGARET. But that girl —

GEORGE. Will keep. There's no hurry. If she did steal the necklace she won't leave the house without it and we can keep our eye on her.

MARGARET (*despairingly*). Oh, George! Did you ever see such a—a mixed-up crowd of people in all your life? Amelia is impossible; the maid isn't who she's supposed to be; the Carsons came uninvited; Gertrude is mixed up in two thefts inside of two days, and—and—oh, I could just cry!

GEORGE. Well! You would have a house-party!

CURTAIN

### ACT III

*Same scene. Late afternoon, same day.*

*(Curtain rises with ROBERT and ROSANNE sitting on divan. They are facing each other, ROBERT holding ROSANNE's hand.)*

ROBERT. And to think, dear, that after all these years I should meet the one woman!

ROSANNE. Bob! I —

*(Stops suddenly, rises and walks to R. C., standing with her back to ROBERT.)*

ROBERT *(following her)*. When will you marry me, Rosanne?

ROSANNE *(turning and facing him)*. Bob, I am forty-five!

ROBERT. So am I, dear!

ROSANNE. But do you think we would be happy together?

ROBERT. Why not?

ROSANNE. I have been a professional woman for years, my own mistress. If I married all that will be changed.

ROBERT. You could still be your own mistress, only you would have to give up the stage.

ROSANNE. I am ready to do that now. I intend producing Mr. Delmar's play and then retiring.

ROBERT. I have a little business deal to put through and then I am going to the South Seas. Marry me, Rosanne, and come with me.

ROSANNE *(dreamily)*. The South Seas! I have always wanted to go there!

ROBERT. Then marry me and come with me.

ROSANNE. But I promised Mr. Delmar to produce his play.

ROBERT. But when you gave him that promise you didn't know you were going to marry me.

ROSANNE. No, I didn't. Oh, Bob, you tempt me strongly, but I —

ROBERT. Then come! Oh, Rosanne! We'll be so happy together. (*Attempts to place his arms around her but she prevents him.*) Don't you love me, Rosanne?

ROSANNE. Yes, but it has been so sudden, Bob. It has swept me off my feet. Give me time to think it over. I know nothing about you, nor you about me.

ROBERT. I know all about you that I care to know. It seems I have known you for years.

ROSANNE. Instead of only meeting me a few days ago.

ROBERT. When will you give me your answer?

ROSANNE. To-morrow! I'll think it over to-night.

(*They turn toward C. D. as MARGARET enters L.*)

MARGARET. I beg your pardon. (*Turns to go out.*)

ROBERT. I was just leaving, Mrs. Brackton. (*To ROSANNE.*) I'll be anxiously waiting. [*Exits stairs.*]

ROSANNE (*watches him off, then turns to MARGARET*). Margaret, do you think I would be happy if I married at my age?

MARGARET. He has asked you then?

(*Goes around to front of divan.*)

ROSANNE. Yes. He wants me to marry him right away and — Oh, Margaret! I don't know what to do.

MARGARET. Mr. Jones is a fortunate man.

ROSANNE. But I haven't given him his answer yet!

MARGARET. You have only known him a few days.

ROSANNE. That's what bothers me. I'm not a foolish chit of a girl to be rushed headlong into something that may mean a lifetime of misery to me and yet—Bob is the first man, in all my life, who has ever asked me to marry him.

MARGARET. That hardly seems possible. You are popular, wealthy —

ROSANNE. That's just it. I think I have been *too* popular.

(*After a slight pause.*)

MARGARET. There isn't much I can say. It is a problem for you to work out, alone. There is only one thing that makes me fearful. When George asked me to marry him, I didn't hesitate an instant. I *knew*, so be sure your heart is leading you rightly. Now I must go up and see if there is anything I can do for Amelia. It's her "nerves," you know. If I ever have another house-party —

ROSANNE. Your house-party will turn out all right.

MARGARET. With what I have on my hands? You are optimistic to say the least. (*At foot of stairs.*)

ROSANNE. If Gertrude is in her room, ask her to come down and see me.

MARGARET (*back c.*). There's another thing, Rosanne! Hugh says he is positive he saw Gertrude place that necklace in Geraldine's apron pocket but when we looked for it, it wasn't there. And Geraldine isn't Geraldine Kay at all but Geraldine Carson, daughter of the Carsons visiting us. Everything is so mixed up I don't know what to think.

ROSANNE. I wouldn't worry about Geraldine. She is a level-headed, sensible girl, if I'm not mistaken, and if she has been masquerading as "Geraldine Kay," she has had a good reason for it. As for Gertrude, let me handle her. Ask her to come down here, please.

MARGARET. Wouldn't it be terrible if Amelia's supposition that she isn't Gertrude Worden should be right?

ROSANNE. Amelia is always imagining things. Run along and send Gertrude down to me.

MARGARET (*doubtfully*). I don't know whether I should, Rosanne. The poor child has a nervous headache from Amelia's accusation and —

ROSANNE. A little fresh air will do her good.

MARGARET. All right, I'll tell her but — (*Solemnly.*)  
Oh, Rosanne! If I ever have another house-party —

[*Exits stairs.*]



(ROSANNE stands for an instant in center of room. She then goes to C. D. and stands in hallway, where she will not be seen by anyone coming down stairs. GERTRUDE appears at head of stairs. She is dressed in negligee and is holding her head as though suffering with headache. She slowly descends stairs, stopping on last step. She looks around room and seeing it apparently empty, her demeanor suddenly changes. She darts across stage to chair R. C., drops on her knees and is frantically searching under chair for necklace when ROSANNE walks to L. of divan, down to L. C. and speaks.)

ROSANNE. There is no use in you looking for it, Gertrude. I have it.

GERTRUDE (*rises hurriedly and makes two or three attempts to speak*). Have—have what, Aunt Rosanne?

ROSANNE. The necklace! I took it from under the chair.

(*Removes necklace from her pocket or dress and holds it up.*)

GERTRUDE (*starts as she sees necklace*). Oh, Aunt Rosanne! Isn't it wonderful that you have found it? Now you can give it back to Aunt Amelia and think how happy it will make her.

ROSANNE. No, I think you had better give it back, dear. (*Offers necklace to GERTRUDE.*)

GERTRUDE (*drawing away from it*). Oh, no! I wouldn't touch it. I don't want to have anything at all to do with it.

ROSANNE. No? If that is the way you feel about it, you shouldn't have touched it in the first place.

GERTRUDE (*earnestly*). But I never did, Aunt Rosanne.

ROSANNE. Then what were you looking for under the chair?

GERTRUDE. My—my diamond pin.

ROSANNE. You are wearing it!

GERTRUDE. Not this one; another one.

ROSANNE (*looks at GERTRUDE for a moment; GERTRUDE stares her in the face, defiantly, but finally drops her eyes*). Gertrude! You are lying!

(*Spoken in a very quiet, matter-of-fact tone.*)

GERTRUDE (*furiously*). How dare you speak to me like that? I shall tell Aunt Margaret!

(*Starts toward stairs.*)

ROSANNE. Just a moment! (*GERTRUDE stops.*) I wouldn't do that, if I were you. She knows you put the necklace in the maid's pocket.

GERTRUDE. She knows — (*Stops.*)

ROSANNE. Yes, you were seen doing it and Margaret was advised of the fact. Now be a good girl and return the necklace to Mrs. Delmar. Then, if I were in your place, I would receive a hurry call back East and leave.

(*Again offers necklace to GERTRUDE.*)

GERTRUDE (*takes necklace*). But—but, Aunt Rosanne! (*Half-crying.*) You shouldn't have such thoughts toward me! Why, Aunt Rosanne! You surely don't think I *stole* the necklace?

ROSANNE. Oh, no! You just wanted it and took it. You can *call* it what you please.

GERTRUDE. But Aunt Rosanne! I—I couldn't help myself. I'm a kleptomaniac!

ROSANNE (*indulgently*). Yes, dear, I know. I have met a lot of people in my career who were kleptomaniacs when they saw something they wanted and didn't have the money to buy. Now replace the necklace where you got it and *don't leave until you do*, because I will be watching you.

GERTRUDE. Oh, I'm so misunderstood!

ROSANNE. Don't start that either, Gertrude! One misunderstood person around the house at a time is about enough, so don't try to steal Mrs. Delmar's thunder.

GERTRUDE. But I *am*, Aunt Rosanne! Yesterday on the train with that horrid policeman and now you. But you won't say anything to Aunt Margaret, will you?

ROSANNE. Not if you return the necklace *at once*, and then leave.

GERTRUDE. I will, really I will.

(*Starts hurriedly for stairs, as ROSANNE turns to walk L. At foot of stairs GERTRUDE stops and turns to ROSANNE with a look of fury on her face. ROSANNE turns just at that moment and sees her.*)

ROSANNE. My dear child! You mustn't feel *that way* about it. Perhaps I had better go with you.

(*GERTRUDE runs up-stairs. ROSANNE smiles and follows her. Bell is heard twice with a pause between the rings. After the second ring GEORGE enters L., goes out C. D. and returns with telegram. He is just about to open it when BARTLEY descends stairs.*)

BARTLEY. I have had business in the city, George, almost constantly since I arrived, but I have been wanting to see you.

GEORGE (*placing telegram, unopened, in his pocket*). And I have been wanting to have a talk with you.

BARTLEY. George! What I am about to tell you is in the strictest confidence.

GEORGE. Certainly, if you ask it. (*BARTLEY removes cardcase from his inside pocket, opens it, and holds it out in front of GEORGE. Startled.*) Do you mean to tell me that you are in government work?

BARTLEY (*replacing cardcase in pocket*). For the past fifteen years.

GEORGE. But your—er—record?

BARTLEY. Part of the game! (*At chair R. c.*)

GEORGE. Part of the game? Part of—I see! And your wife?

BARTLEY. Is my right-hand man! We are known in police circles from Coast to Coast. I suppose there isn't a rogue's gallery from New York to San Francisco that doesn't contain our pictures.

GEORGE (*reaching his hand to BARTLEY*). I'm glad my belief in you was right, Bart! I *knew* old Bart Carson wasn't crooked. (*They shake hands heartily.*)

BARTLEY. Thanks, George! While most of our work has been among counterfeiters and post-office thieves, the case that brought me to California is considerably out of that line and, frankly, is one that goes against the grain, yet I asked for it and I must go through with it.

GEORGE. Is there anything I can do for you?

BARTLEY. I don't know whether you can or not. (*Walks to window and stands with back to GEORGE for a moment. He then goes to chair R. C., where he seats himself, as GEORGE sits on divan.*) George! Has Bob told you anything of his activities since his father's business was closed?

GEORGE. Not much. I understand he *was* working for Uncle Sam but I inquired yesterday as to what he was following and he gave me little satisfaction.

BARTLEY. He went into the State Department during the War, rose rapidly and soon held a good position. When the Eighteenth Amendment went into effect, it of course hit him pretty hard as practically all he had was tied up in the brewing establishment he had inherited from his father.

GEORGE. So I understand.

BARTLEY. He chose to blame the loss of his fortune on the Government and became morose and sullen.

GEORGE. We talked that over. I tried to tell him the individual must always make way for the Nation's good but he couldn't see it that way.

BARTLEY. No, he can't or won't realize that. He blames his Government for his present ill-fortune and has made the remark more than once that he intends making it pay. (*Rises and crosses to divan where he sits beside GEORGE.*) George! Two weeks ago Bob left Washington on his vacation. The day after, it was found that some very important state papers, that if published to the world will mean irreparable loss to the United States, had vanished.

GEORGE. But Bob wouldn't —

BARTLEY. Bob's chief tried to get in touch with him, thinking that he had possibly filed them in some secret place, but Bob had given up his rooms, disposed of all his

belongings and disappeared. The only inference that could be taken was that the papers had disappeared with him.

GEORGE (*horrified*). But man! That—why that's treason!

BARTLEY. Almost. We've got to get those papers, George. No one knows of their loss as yet but Bob's chief, myself and you. We must save old Bob from himself. I've gone through his baggage twice and followed him to town yesterday and this morning but have been able to find absolutely nothing, but we know he has them.

GEORGE. But Bart! Let me think! I can't conceive of Bob doing such a thing.

BARTLEY. Neither can I, but he has become so obsessed with this idea of being wronged by his Government that I think he is really out of his mind on the question. When Wardlaw, Bob's superior, called for someone to handle the case, I happened to be in the office. In fact, I was just about to resign, but when I heard the theft was laid to Bob Jones, I saw Wardlaw and asked for two weeks. If I can get the papers within that time, I think the whole thing can be quieted, but my time is about up.

GEORGE. But if you don't succeed?

BARTLEY. If I don't, I guess old Bob will have to take his medicine! When I took the case I did some frantic scouting around before I found out that he had left for here, as he had covered his tracks pretty well, but I finally located his trail and followed him. That's why I came uninvited, George. I simply *had* to be here.

GEORGE. Forget that part of it, Bart. We are proud to have you with us.

BARTLEY. I wired the Chief this morning that so far I have been unsuccessful and am now awaiting instructions.

GEORGE. Have you mentioned the matter to Bob?

BARTLEY. Not yet. Had I found the papers I intended taking them and returning them, but so far I have been unable to locate them. I feel sure he has them with him as they are too valuable to trust away from him.

ROBERT (*appears on stairs*). Now what are you plotting? (*Goes down stairs, as BARTLEY and GEORGE turn toward him without answering.*) What's wrong?

(*In front of chair R. C.*)

BARTLEY (*walking up to ROBERT*). Bob! What have you done with the Honadaguay papers?

(*GEORGE rises and is standing L. C.*)

ROBERT (*stands for an instant, looking BARTLEY in the eye*). What's that to you?

BARTLEY. What is it to me? Man! Don't you realize the position in which you have placed yourself? You will be doing your Government harm beyond measure——

ROBERT (*angrily*). And what about the harm my Government has done me? Have you taken that into consideration?

BARTLEY. But Bob! Embarrassing your Government by stealing its secret papers won't help you any. You weren't the only one that was affected by that legislation, Bob. There were thousands like you. They took their medicine like men. Why can't you?

ROBERT. The Government had a right to reimburse me for what it took from me. It ruined my prospects, made my property worthless and left me——stranded. Then you talk to me about loyalty! Well! It's not getting it!

BARTLEY. But the papers, Bob, what have you done with them? You will be ruined ——

ROBERT (*sarcastically*). Humph! I don't see why you should excite yourself about *my* ruined reputation. Yours isn't so good that a little thing like that should worry you.

[*Exits window; GEORGE and BARTLEY staring after him.*]

GEORGE. He's playing the part of a fool!

BARTLEY. Of course he is. He was a fool when he took the papers, but what can we do?

GEORGE. Let's make another search through his baggage. Come on.

(*Hurriedly exits stairs, followed by BARTLEY. Stage is vacant for a moment. CHING enters L. and crosses*

*stage toward stairs. As he reaches foot of stairs ROBERT appears in window and calls.)*

ROBERT. Ching! (*Crosses to c.*)

CHING. Allee li!

ROBERT. Ching! Go to Miss Markle's room and ask her to come down here, *at once*. Tell her it is important, *very important*. (*Hands coin to CHING.*) Take that and *hurry*. (*Shoves CHING toward stairs.*)

CHING. Nothe' fi' dolla'! Holy smokee! (*Runs up-stairs. ROBERT walks impatiently back and forth between window and stairs. Finally stops at foot of stairs and waits, watching stairs. CHING enters stairs.*) She come! Me telly hully. Hully like Debbil! [*Exits L.*

(*After a short pause, ROBERT remaining at foot of stairs, ROSANNE enters stairs.*)

ROSANNE (*anxiously*). Bob! What is wrong?

(*Standing in front of ROBERT at foot of stairs.*)

ROBERT. Rosanne! I am called away from here at once. Do you love me enough to marry me before I go?

ROSANNE. Marry you at once! Why, Bob, I —

ROBERT (*insisting*). Do you, Rosanne? For God's sake answer me!

ROSANNE. Bob! You are excited! What has happened?

ROBERT (*turns and walks to L. c., ROSANNE following him slowly to c.*). Yes, I am excited, but — (*Turns toward ROSANNE.*) Forgive me, dear! I'm foolish, I know. But I am called away, Rosanne. I am leaving for San Francisco at once and from there for Tahiti. Will you marry me and go with me?

ROSANNE (*after a moment's hesitation*). Yes, Bob, I will!

ROBERT. Thank God! You will never regret it. Pack a few things and be here in ten minutes. I'll bring the car around to the window and we'll be off.

ROSANNE. But Bob! I must tell Margaret I am leaving. I couldn't leave without her knowing it.

ROBERT. No! No! You must tell no one. Promise me you won't.

ROSANNE. But Bob! I couldn't do that. What would Margaret think of me?

ROBERT (*despairingly*). Oh, I was a fool to think you would go. I might have known you wouldn't!

(*Turns to go out C. D.*)

ROSANNE (*calls just as ROBERT is disappearing in hall*). Bob! Wait! (*ROBERT returns, standing in doorway*). Bob! I—I will go.

ROBERT (*crosses quickly to ROSANNE and takes her in his arms*). You will never regret it, dear. Now we must hurry! I'll be back here in ten minutes. You won't disappoint me?

ROSANNE. No, Bob! I—I'll be here.

(*Exits stairs. BOB watches her off, then goes out window. Bell rings twice. After second ring CHING enters L., goes out C. D. and returns with JOHNSON.*)

CHING. You want see Boss-man Blackton?

JOHNSON. That's the one. (*GEORGE and BARTLEY appear on stairs.*) Ah! There he is. (*Goes down c., as GEORGE and BARTLEY go down R. C.*) Mr. Brackton! I have just discovered something. (*CHING goes out door L.*) I would prefer speaking to you *alone*!

(*Glances toward BARTLEY.*)

GEORGE. You are safe in speaking before Mr. Carson, Mr.——

JOHNSON. Johnson is my name. As for *him* (*Nods toward BARTLEY.*), this is something *private*!

(*GEORGE turns toward BARTLEY, who nods his head in the affirmative.*)

GEORGE. Mr. Carson is in Government service, Johnson!

JOHNSON (*sneeringly*). Government service, eh? Him? That's a good one! He'll have to show me. (*BARTLEY*



*crosses to JOHNSON and holds his card in front of him to be read. JOHNSON reads the card, then takes it from BARTLEY'S hand and looks back and forth from card to BARTLEY puzzled.*) Well, by gum! But your record? Why, I just looked up your mug in the gallery yesterday.

BARTLEY (*taking card from JOHNSON*). My record is one of my biggest assets! Accumulated after years of hard work! (*Returns to R. C.*)

JOHNSON. That's sure a new one on me, but I guess you're all right. (*To GEORGE.*) What I wanted to tell you, Mr. Brackton, is this: Did you ever see that?

(*Takes picture from his pocket and hands it to GEORGE.*)

GEORGE (*looking at picture*). Yes! That's Miss Worden's picture.

JOHNSON (*taking picture and putting it in his pocket*). "Miss Worden"! She's hooked you good. That's Molly Le Blanc, one of the shrewdest confidence women in the United States. She's wanted in half a dozen places. I thought I knew her yesterday but I couldn't just place her. She's taken you in for some reason or other. Better get in touch with the real Miss Worden at once.

GEORGE. I received a telegram for my wife this afternoon. I wonder —

(*Removes telegram from his pocket, opens it, reads it and then hands it to JOHNSON.*)

JOHNSON (*reads telegram*). "Sorry can't make trip. Maid disappeared with my clothes and ticket. Have been so upset forgot to wire you earlier. Letter following. Gertrude." I thought so. (*Hands telegram to GEORGE, who replaces it in his pocket.*) I think I'll just put the nippers on that young lady while I have the chance.

(*Starts for stairs.*)

BARTLEY. Just a moment, Mr. Johnson! There is a man in this house with something that means a lot more to our Government than the capture of Miss Le Blanc. He may or may not try to escape. If he does you can

be quite a help to me. Will you forget the young lady for a while and assist me?

JOHNSON. On a Government job? I should hope to tell you I will.

BARTLEY. If this man does try to get away, it will probably be by machine. Have you a man with you?

JOHNSON. Kelly! He's out in the car.

BARTLEY. One of you go to the front and one to the rear entrance of the grounds. If a man tries to go out, stop him and hold him until you get in touch with me.

JOHNSON. Just hold him?

BARTLEY. That's all.

JOHNSON. I get you, Cap! [Exits C. D.]

GEORGE. I can't think of having the police lay in wait for old Bob.

(ROSANNE appears on stairs, wearing coat and hat.)

BARTLEY. It's for his own good. I can see no other way out of it.

(ROSANNE turns to go back up-stairs but on hearing ROBERT'S name, in next speech, she stops.)

GEORGE. Bob was the soul of honor. It don't seem possible, but perhaps he can explain.

BARTLEY. It's a little hard to explain an act like his. To say the least it's treachery toward his Government.

GEORGE (sitting R. C.). I—I just can't think of a policeman laying in wait for old Bob.

(ROSANNE goes down stairs, stopping at bottom.)

ROSANNE. I couldn't help but hear you. Are you speaking of Mr. Jones?

GEORGE (after an instant's hesitation). Yes.

ROSANNE. He has done something dishonorable? (BARTLEY and GEORGE exchange glances without replying. ROSANNE, C.) Please tell me. It—it means a lot to me!

GEORGE. Perhaps she could help.

BARTLEY. Mr. Jones left Washington with some Government papers in his possession.

ROSANNE. You mean—he stole them?

BARTLEY. In a way, yes. George and I are trying to get them back before anything happens.

ROSANNE (*sinking on divan*). Mr. Jones has stolen something from his Government?

BARTLEY (*gently*). Some very valuable papers which could do untold injury to the State in improper hands.

ROSANNE. But why? Mr. Jones is not a criminal. Why should he do such a thing?

GEORGE. The only reason we can fathom is on account of his resentment toward his Government for closing down his business.

ROSANNE. But that's so foolish, so childish. (*Turns toward BARTLEY.*) Are you interested in this because of your friendship for him?

GEORGE. Mr. Carson is in the Secret Service.

ROSANNE (*dully*). Mr. Jones just asked me to marry him and I—agreed! I am expecting him here in a moment. May I speak with him—alone? Perhaps I can help you in the restoration of the papers.

BARTLEY. If you have any influence with him, Miss Markle, for his own sake, use it!

[GEORGE and BARTLEY *exit stairs*.

CHING (*enters L., going down to L. of divan*). Missy! Boss-man Jones say come quick!

ROSANNE. Where is Mr. Jones, Ching?

CHING. Kitchen door!

ROSANNE. Tell him to come here, Ching.

CHING. But he say come *there*, quick!

ROSANNE. Tell him I want to see him *here*!

CHING (*stands for a moment irresolute*). Oh, allee li!  
[*Exits L.*

(ROSANNE *removes her coat and hat and is sitting on divan when ROBERT enters L. He is wearing light coat and carries his hat.*)

ROBERT. Hurry, Rosanne! We must leave at once!

ROSANNE (*slowly*). I am not going!

ROBERT. You are not going! But you promised!

ROSANNE. Sit down, Bob! I have something to say to you.

ROBERT (*sits beside her and looks at her for a moment*). Have you been talking to Carson?

ROSANNE. Yes!

ROBERT. And he calls himself a friend of mine!

ROSANNE. Don't blame him, Bob. He is but doing his duty toward his Government.

ROBERT (*bitterly*). "His Government." A great Government we have. Takes all a man has and leaves him flat—broke!

ROSANNE. Bob! When you asked me to marry you, you made me very happy, happier, I believe, than I have ever been before in my life.

ROBERT (*eagerly*). And I'll make you happy for the rest of your life. (*Rises.*) Come! We can still —

ROSANNE (*shaking her head negatively*). No, Bob! You have done wrong toward your Government. You must clear it up.

ROBERT (*excitedly*). But my Government took —

ROSANNE. Suppose, for the sake of argument, your Government *did* take something belonging to you. Is that any reason for *you* being a thief?

ROBERT (*angrily*). Rosanne!

ROSANNE. Exactly, Bob, a thief! Why did you take those papers? What do you intend doing with them?

ROBERT (*sinking on divan beside her*). I—don't—know!

ROSANNE. Did you intend selling them?

ROBERT. Selling them? You mean for money?

ROSANNE. Yes!

ROBERT. Good Lord no! I wouldn't do *that*!

ROSANNE. Then why did you take them?

ROBERT. To tell the truth, Rosanne, I don't know. I had brooded over the loss of all I had to such an extent that I thought the Government ought to pay, so when I had an opportunity of taking the papers I took them and came West.

ROSANNE. But why, Bob, why?

ROBERT. Oh, don't ask me why! I—— (*Turns to her, speaking angrily and excitedly.*) They had no right to confiscate my holdings, for that's all you could call it.

My father worked for years to build up the business he left to me. It was licensed by the Government and enlarged and expanded under Government supervision, but with one sweep it was wiped away and I was left—flat!

ROSANNE. You were not the only one! There were many others and what are the hardships of one or two or a thousand or two, for that matter, compared to the untold good that will develop from that great act in the years to come. Whether the law was applied properly, I am not prepared to say, but it is the law and as good American citizens we must respect it.

ROBERT. "We must respect it"! That's easy enough for you to say. All *you* had was not taken.

ROSANNE. If it had, I believe I would still be American enough to go ahead, looking the world in the face, without lending myself to a treasonable plot——

ROBERT (*in a hurt voice*). Rosanne!

ROSANNE. That may be a little strong, Bob, but that's how it looks to me. You have brooded over a fancied wrong for years until your sense of right has been warped. You must turn-about-face, Bob, and straighten things out.

(ROBERT rises, crosses to window and stands looking off R. for a moment. He then goes down R. C. and speaks.)

ROBERT. Who is that at the gate?

ROSANNE. The police, I presume! I heard Mr. Carson mention the fact that the police were here.

(He goes back to window, looks out, and again returns to R. C.)

ROBERT (*with a gesture of despair*). What shall I do, Rosanne?

ROSANNE. Go down to the gate, give yourself up, and save your friend the humiliation of arresting you.

ROBERT. And you?

ROSANNE. I will do everything I can to help you. My influence is not small and perhaps I can do much.

ROBERT. And if I should have to go—— (*Stops.*)

ROSANNE. If you do—have to go—bear it like a man.

ROBERT. And—when I get out?

ROSANNE. When you get out—we will talk things over—then.

ROBERT (*picks up hat and stands with bowed head for a moment*). Rosanne! I—I——

ROSANNE (*extends her hand toward him*). Good-bye and—God bless you, Bob!

ROBERT (*takes her hand*). I'll send Ching with my grip. Tell Bart it has a false bottom. And—and—Good-bye! [*Rushes out L.*]

(ROSANNE sits for a moment in an effort to control herself. She then rises and is standing before divan as CHING enters L. with grip. He crosses to R. of divan.)

CHING. Boss-man Jones say you take this!

ROSANNE. Thanks, Ching! (*He places grip near her.*)

CHING (*looking up into ROSANNE's face*). You sick?

ROSANNE. No, Ching! (*Slight pause.*)

CHING (*still watching her*). You like glass olange juice?

ROSANNE. No, Ching!

CHING. Cup hot coffee?

ROSANNE. No, thank you, Ching!

CHING. You feel bad, Ching velly velly solly!

ROSANNE (*smiling slightly*). I know you are, Ching! (*CHING stands for a moment watching her. He then crosses to door L. Stops at door and looks toward ROSANNE anxiously. Then shakes his head and exits L. ROSANNE crosses to stairs and calls.*) Mr. Carson!

(*She returns to divan and seats herself.*)

BARTLEY (*enters stairs, with GEORGE. They go down R. C.*). Have you been successful?

ROSANNE. There is a false bottom to his grip. He said to look there. (*Points to grip.*)

BARTLEY (*on his knees by grip*). A false bottom! I never thought of that. (*Opens grip and removes various*

*articles of clothing. Feels around inside of grip. Takes penknife from pocket and rips cloth in bottom of grip and then removes large envelope containing papers.)* Miss Markle! You have done a valuable work for your Government. (*Rises.*)

ROSANNE. I'm afraid I wasn't thinking so much of my Government, Mr. Carson, as I was of the man I love.

(*Bell rings.*)

BARTLEY. That you succeeded is the main thing.

CHING (*enters C. D. with telegram*). Telegram fo' boss man Carson!

(*Gives telegram to BARTLEY and exits L.* BARTLEY opens telegram, seats himself in chair R. C., takes small book from his pocket and proceeds to decode the telegram. When he is through an expression of amazement crosses his face. He hurriedly opens envelope removed from ROBERT'S grip and examines the contents. He then falls back limply in the chair, ROSANNE and GEORGE watching him closely during all this.)

GEORGE. What is the matter?

BARTLEY (*hands telegram to him*). Read that!

GEORGE. But it's in code!

BARTLEY (*takes telegram and reads, slowly*). "Return immediately! Papers located. Placed in wrong folder in error. Gaines."

ROSANNE. The papers located!

GEORGE. But what are those?

(*Points to papers removed from envelope.*)

BARTLEY. As near as I can make out nothing but ordinary papers on office routine.

ROSANNE. Then he didn't steal the papers at all?

BARTLEY. It looks that way.

ROSANNE. Thank God! Is there any possibility of trouble of it?

BARTLEY. There can't be. Although there is no doubt

he *intended* taking the papers, the fact remains he didn't.

ROSANNE. Let me be the one to tell him.

*[Exits window.]*

GEORGE. And to think that on the verge of a crime, Bob should win the love of a woman like that.

BARTLEY. With all her wealth and fame, she seems as unspoiled as a girl in her teens.

GEORGE. She is. I don't think there is a finer woman living than Rosanne Markle—unless it is Margaret Brackton.

BARTLEY. Or Inez Carson! *(They both laugh.)*

*(ROSANNE and ROBERT enter window. ROSANNE stops just inside the window but ROBERT crosses to BARTLEY.)*

ROBERT. Bart! I—I've been a fool and it's only by chance that I'm not a—criminal or worse!

BARTLEY *(shaking hands with him)*. Forget it, Bob! You brooded too long!

ROBERT. I never opened the envelope but I thought all the time I really had the papers. I—I've been a fool but I would have returned them sooner or later for I don't believe I could do anything that would really injure my country.

GEORGE. Of course not, Bob, not with the heritage you have. Our country is not infallible, it might do wrong but—right or wrong——

ROSANNE *(softly)*. It would still be our country.

BARTLEY. Now, I'm going to send in my resignation. I told the chief this was my last job and I'm going to make my words good.

*(Turns toward stairs, as GERALDINE runs down stairs, followed slowly by INEZ.)*

GERALDINE *(goes to BARTLEY and throws her arms around his neck)*. Oh, father! Mother has just told me everything.

INEZ *(at foot of stairs)*. I thought I might relieve her anxiety, Bart, as this was our last case.



BARTLEY. You did right, Inez. I'm sending in my resignation to-night.

GERALDINE. I think I'm the happiest girl in California! (*Takes BARTLEY and INEZ by the arm.*) Come! I want to hunt Hugh and tell him! [*They exit c. d.*]

GEORGE (*watching them off*). No wonder she's happy! To find her father and mother are not crim — (*Looks quickly toward ROBERT and stops.*) By the way, Rosanne! Amelia was right. That girl isn't Gertrude Worden.

(*Hands telegram to ROSANNE.*)

ROSANNE. So I surmised! (*Reads telegram.*) Um-humph! I saw the transaction with the necklace and had a talk with the young lady. She will be leaving you shortly, I saw to that. I wouldn't mention it to Margaret, though, for the present.

GEORGE. She *has* had about enough for two days, hasn't she? [*Exits stairs.*]

(*There is a slight pause after GEORGE leaves. Then ROBERT leads ROSANNE to divan.*)

ROSANNE. Thank God, dear, it turned out as it did.

ROBERT. I can't understand it. I intended taking the papers, Rosanne, and thought all along I had them. Someone must have placed —

ROSANNE. It makes no difference how the mistake occurred, Bob. We can just feel thankful it did.

ROBERT. And dare I hope, Rosanne, that some day —

ROSANNE. Yes, dear, you may, but not right away. I will produce Mr. Delmar's play as I planned. I could help him just as easily without it but I know he wouldn't permit it. If the play is a success, which I feel sure it will be, it will place his feet on the first rung of the ladder, at any rate.

ROBERT. You know best, dear, but it seems hard to wait.

ROSANNE. It won't be more than a year.

ROBERT. Perhaps by that time I will be a little more worthy.

ROSANNE. That question will never come up between us.

*(They are interrupted by JOHNSON appearing in C. D. with GERTRUDE. He is holding her by the arm. She is dressed for traveling and is carrying a small hand-bag.)*

JOHNSON. Come along, Molly!

*(Jerks her roughly down R. C.)*

GERTRUDE. Molly! How dare you! My name is Gertrude Worden, and I shall tell Aunt Margaret about this *(ROSANNE rises and faces GERTRUDE.)* and—and—— *(Stops.)*

ROSANNE. And what?

*(Hands telegram she received from GEORGE, to GERTRUDE. GERTRUDE reads telegram, shrugs her shoulders, tosses the telegram to ROSANNE and turns to JOHNSON.)*

GERTRUDE. All right, cappie. Come on!

ROSANNE. Don't you think you had better return the necklace before you leave? I'm sure you stole it again.

GERTRUDE. Sure! *(Opens her coat and removes necklace from her neck.)* Anything else?

*(Hands necklace to ROSANNE.)*

ROSANNE. Yes, if you have anything else that belongs here.

JOHNSON. I'd just leave things until she is searched at the station, Miss. You'll get everything that belongs to you. Now come along, Molly.

*(Takes GERTRUDE by the shoulder.)*

GERTRUDE *(jerking angrily away from JOHNSON)*. Keep your dirty hands off me!

JOHNSON. Oh ho! Getting high-toned since you've been hobnobbing in society. All right, Miss Le Blanc. Will you honor me?

(*Offers his arm in mock courtesy. GERTRUDE glares at him with disdain and exits with head up. JOHNSON smiles and follows.*)

ROBERT. What happened to her?

(*MARGARET and AMELIA appear on stairs. ROSANNE notices MARGARET, turns to ROBERT and speaks in a low voice.*)

ROSANNE. Go out in the garden, dear. I will join you in five minutes.

(*ROBERT exits window as MARGARET and AMELIA come down stairs.*)

MARGARET (C.). Rosanne! Amelia is leaving! We expected her to stay at least a month.

AMELIA (*snappily, as she sits in chair R. C.*). I know you did but I intend leaving for Pittsburgh at once. The trip across the continent was entirely too much for me in my delicate state of health and then being thrown with the class of people I have since I arrived —

ROSANNE (L. C.). Amelia!

AMELIA. It's all right for you, Rosanne; your nerves are not in the dreadful state mine are in. The trip was entirely too much for me and that with the loss of my necklace —

ROSANNE. Your necklace has been recovered, Amelia!

(*Gives necklace to AMELIA.*)

AMELIA. Found! My necklace!

MARGARET. Where did you get it, Rosanne?

ROSANNE. That girl *had* taken it. She is an imposter.

AMELIA (*rising*). I knew it! I knew it instantly! I must leave here at once. I—I — (*Staggers.*) Help me, someone. I am going to faint. I know I shall faint.

(*MARGARET helps her to chair R. C. as DAVID enters window with HUGH, GERALDINE and INEZ.*)

DAVID (*crosses to AMELIA*). Amelia! What is wrong?

AMELIA. Oh, David! My necklace has been found. My precious necklace that my great-aunt Amelia willed to me. Now David, I think we had better make our preparations for returning to Pittsburgh at once. No one knows what else is liable to happen in this dreadful place.

DAVID (*looks at his wife with disdain; then turns to MARGARET*). Mrs. Brackton! I spoke to you this morning about Mrs. Delmar and I being called back to Pittsburgh. We are leaving this evening. Come, Amelia!

AMELIA (*rising*). I won't say that I haven't enjoyed the short time I have been with you, Margaret, but —

DAVID (*interrupting*). Amelia! We have our packing to do.

AMELIA. Don't hurry me, David. You know I can't be hurried. (*At foot of stairs.*) Margaret, dear! Would you have Ching make me another glass of that delicious orange juice? It refreshes me so. What time is it, David?

DAVID (*looks at watch*). Three forty-five.

AMELIA. Oh, is that all! We still have four hours before train time. I believe I'll have Ching prepare a lunch for me, too, before I go. A cup of coffee is so good to settle my nerves. (*To MARGARET.*) Will you tell him about it, dear?

MARGARET. I will arrange for it, Amelia.

AMELIA. Thank you, so much. Come, David!

[*Exits stairs on DAVID's arm.*]

HUGH (*who has been standing back of divan with GERALDINE*). Please pardon mother, Mrs. Brackton.

MARGARET (*starting for door L.*). I understand, Hugh.

GERALDINE. Let me arrange the lunch, Mrs. Brackton.

[*Exits L.*]

HUGH (*looks after her for an instant and then turns to MARGARET*). May I —

MARGARET (*smiling*). Yes, you may. I am quite sure she will be glad of your assistance.

[*HUGH hurriedly exits L.*]

ROSANNE. If she *does* go, Margaret, you can get down on your knees and thank God for it.

MARGARET. Rosanne! You are *so* outspoken!

INEZ (*going forward*). I have been awaiting the opportunity of thanking you, Mrs. Brackton, for your kindness to Bartley and me since our arrival. We came uninvited and ——

MARGARET. George has told me of why you made the trip. We will feel honored if you will spend your time in California with us. I am frank to admit that in making up our list of guests, your name was omitted but now that we understand —— There are few who could or would give to their government what you and your husband have.

HUGH (*enters L. with GERALDINE*). Mrs. Brackton! I'm not going East with Dad and mother and I've just thought of something.

MARGARET. It must be something good from your smiling face.

HUGH. We have waited so long, Geraldine and I; may we be married from here?

INEZ. Geraldine!

MARGARET. May you be married from here? (*Takes GERALDINE in her arms and kisses her.*) My dear! My dear! I'll be almost as pleased to have you married from my home as though you were a daughter of my own. When shall it be?

GERALDINE. We must talk that over first. You have been so good to me, Mrs. Brackton. I—I —— (*Kisses MARGARET.*) Come, Hugh! We must finish that lunch.

MARGARET. I'll attend to the lunch. Go and make your arrangements and make it *soon*.

GERALDINE. Come, mother! We'll all go and talk it over with Daddy. It can't possibly be before next week.

HUGH. Next week! Why not to-night? I've waited two years already.

GERALDINE. You just let me settle the date, Mr. Hugh. Come on and we'll see Daddy!

(*Exits stairs with HUGH. INEZ watches them off, turns to MARGARET and smiles and follows them.*)

ROSANNE. Go and finish the lunch, Margaret. Amelia

will be after it in about two shakes and I have a few things to say to her, *alone*.

MARGARET. Her lunch! I forgot all about it.

(*Starts toward door L.*)

ROSANNE. Take your time. I have a number of things to tell her before she will be ready to eat it. (*AMELIA appears on stairs.*) What did I tell you! Here she is.

(*MARGARET exits L. as AMELIA comes down stairs, ROSANNE going to L. C.*)

AMELIA. I simply must have a cup of coffee to settle my nerves before I begin packing. My nerves ——

ROSANNE. Would be all right, Amelia, if you would forget them and not eat so much.

AMELIA (*furiously*). A remark like that is to be expected from you, Rosanne Markle.

ROSANNE. Ah! That's better. That's a little more like the old Amelia, the one I knew at school. Do you remember ——

AMELIA (*R. C.*). I don't care to discuss my school-days just at present.

ROSANNE. All right! We'll discuss something a little more important. Do you realize, Amelia, that you are ruining your chances of happiness as well as your husband's ——

AMELIA. I notice you have been much interested in my husband's happiness for the past three days.

ROSANNE. I have been interested in David Delmar for one purpose only. I thought it might possibly bring you to your senses. Mr. Delmar is a sensitive man; he craves your love and sympathy and he resents your constant complaining. He hasn't succeeded in making money, which seems to be all you want, but he has succeeded in retaining his kindness and goodness of heart through all your nagging and, along with it, writing a play that will keep his name before the public for years.

AMELIA (*surprised*). You don't mean his play is really a good one, do you?

ROSANNE. Yes, it is "really a good one." He is proud and happy that, as he puts it, a great actress like myself thinks his play worthy of her talents, but what he wants most of all is a word of commendation from *you*. Why I don't know, but he does. Now, for heaven's sake, Amelia, go and hunt him up and tell him you are proud of him whether you are or not. And another thing, have enough decency about you to stay here and complete your visit. Margaret has had enough heartaches over this house-party without you adding to it.

AMELIA. But his play? What will he make on it?

ROSANNE. The royalties ought to amount to at least forty thousand a year.

AMELIA (*dropping into chair R. C.*). Forty thousand a year for *David's* play?

ROSANNE. Yes, for *David's* play.

MARGARET (*enters L.*). Your lunch is ready, Amelia.

AMELIA (*gathering herself together*). Margaret, dear! Would you think me too changeable if I decided to stay?

MARGARET (*astonished*). Why, no! We would be glad to have you stay. We invited you for a month and you have only been here three days.

AMELIA. David has just disposed of his play to Rosanne and the work has been *so* trying on him. I feel sure a few weeks in this glorious climate will do him good. I am *so* proud of David, Margaret. I always knew he would be a success some day. I have told him many a time, "David! Perseverance always wins! Stick to it!" And now just think; he has succeeded!

(ROSANNE and MARGARET exchange glances, dumb-founded.)

MARGARET. If you are going to remain I will tell Ching you will not care for the lunch. (*Starts toward L.*)

AMELIA (*rising*). No! Don't do that. Now that the lunch is prepared I shall eat it; it wouldn't be fair to Ching not to. He does prepare the most *delicious* lunches. While I think of it, Margaret, would you have some of the guava jelly for dinner this evening that I enjoyed *so* much last night? I know you will, dear.

Isn't it *wonderful* to think David has succeeded? But I knew he would! *Dear David!* [Exits L.

ROSANNE. She's hopeless. It is nearly four o'clock. She is going to have a lunch and is already talking about dinner. Do you know what is the matter with that woman, Margaret? She *eats* too much.

ROBERT (*enters window*). I thought you were only to stay five minutes.

(*Looks at watch which he is holding in his hand.*)

ROSANNE (*looking at her watch*). I've only stayed six. You must learn to always give a woman a little extra time, Bob. [They exit window.

(MARGARET goes back to window and stands watching off R. for a moment. GEORGE enters stairs.)

GEORGE (*on stairs*). All alone?

MARGARET (*crossing to divan*). Yes, all alone. Amelia is at lunch and —

GEORGE. Good Lord! Is that woman *always* eating?

(*Sitting on divan beside MARGARET.*)

MARGARET. George! Someone might hear you. Rosanne and Bob are out in the garden. Isn't it wonderful, dear, that everything should turn out as it has and that after all these years Rosanne should meet the one man?

GEORGE. Um-humph! Where's Bart?

MARGARET. Oh, George! I forgot! We are going to have a wedding here.

GEORGE. A wedding! Whose?

MARGARET. Geraldine's and Hugh's! They want to be married from here!

GEORGE. Married from here?

MARGARET. Yes, from here, and I told them they could.

GEORGE. Well, you're the boss. You'll have all the trouble.

MARGARET. I'm willing to put up with it to have a wedding in the house. I love a wedding.

GEORGE. So does every other woman. Has the evening paper arrived?



MARGARET. I'll see. (*She goes out C. D. while GEORGE goes to table back of divan and lights cigar. MARGARET enters C. D.*) Here it is! (*Gives the paper to GEORGE and they resume their seats on divan, GEORGE immediately becoming immersed in the paper.*) Amelia has changed her mind and is going to finish her visit. (*Pause.*) While she is one of my oldest friends, I really don't see how I am going to put up with her for a month. (*Pause.*) George!

GEORGE (*dropping his paper impatiently*). What is it?

MARGARET. Listen to me when I am talking to you. I said Amelia has changed her mind and is going to finish her visit and I really don't see how I'm going to put up with her for a month.

GEORGE. Well! You would have a house-party!

(*Resumes his paper as MARGARET glares at him angrily.*)

CURTAIN

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**HONORS ARE EVEN.** By Roi Cooper Megrue. 9 men, 4 women. By doubling of characters, the cast can be reduced to 7 men, and 4 women. Easy interior sets. A thrilling play of love, successfully produced at the Selwyn Theatre, New York City. The dramatic values of this play are fully and completely established by the fact that it was written by the author of "It Pays to Advertise," "Under Cover" and other Broadway successes. The story will fascinate and delight your audience. "Honors Are Even," is one of those rare plays which costs little to produce but which makes a most pretentious showing. First of all, Belinda Carter is a modern girl; lovely, beautiful, and the daughter of a steel millionaire. She is the target of all masculinity — proposals of marriage to her are as numerous as flakes in a snow storm. She wearies of them. Along comes John Leighton, a playwright, who secretly falls a victim to her rare charms. But he is not of the marrying kind — he says so himself. The much sought-after Miss Carter is perplexed by John's apparent disregard for anything in the nature of marital bliss and his seeming indifference to the marriage state. She becomes interested in him — interest progresses to admiration and ripens into love. But throughout the progress of evolution, John continues in his frank avowal that marriage may be all right for others but not for him. The pursuit begins on the sands of Atlantic City's beach, proceeds to John's bungalow a-top one of New York's skyscrapers, and culminates in the steel millionaire's home. This is a play of keen interest; a play of man against woman; a battle of love. For once, man triumphs, but not without the glorification of woman. Enjoyed long runs in New York and Boston with the popular stars, William Courtenay and Lola Fisher in the leading roles. The royalty of \$25.00 for each amateur performance, is payable in advance of performance. Rights of production given only under our official contract. Printed books. Price, 75 Cents.

**TEA FOR THREE.** A Comedy in Three Acts. By Roi Cooper Megrue. 3 males and 2 females. Scenery, easy interiors. Plays a full evening. This is one of Mr. Megrue's cleverest comedies. It is not a crook play like "Under Cover," but a suave society comedy in which three characters, husband, wife and candid friend, sustain the play. As a New York critic said at the time of its premier, at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, "The sequences of the story are largely mental rather than physical, and yet the action is rapid, engrossing and logical. It is first rate drama." It is an ironical and sophisticated comedy based upon the "eternal triangle" but in an entirely new manner and it is in no sense a sex play. In fact when the entire situation is revealed in the last act, not only is Friend Husband tremendously surprised but the audience shares his amazement. The dialogue is a perpetual delight and the parts calling for trained and skillful amateurs are admirable in every way. "Tea for Three," was one of the brilliant successes of its day on the professional stage, and will well repay the efforts of any group which is looking for a comedy which is out of the ordinary and is of the finest fibre. Royalty, \$25.00. Price, 75 Cents.

**WHY NOT.** A Comedy in Three Acts. By Jesse Lynch Williams. 4 males, 4 females. One simple interior set. Mr. Williams is fond of the play title that propounds a query. Some years ago he offered "Why Marry," which was awarded the Pulitzer prize as being the best American comedy of that year. "Why Not," is in no sense a sequel, save that it does treat divorce with something of the same philosophic levity superimposed upon a soundly reasoned protest against existing divorce laws and the accepted conventions surrounding the correction of marital mistakes. There is an element of farce in this play which keeps it out of the "problem" class. It is a good natured and above all a very sweet and clean treatment of a subject that is usually associated in everybody's mind with the most degrading aspect of human actions. It is a play about two couples, each with a child to think about, each with the highest religious ideals of conduct and each with the heartiest friendship for the other couple. But nevertheless there is the fact, plain to each, that a blunder has been made from the start, and that honesty and decency demands for each woman and at least for one man, an exchange of husbands. The whole problem of divorce is brought into discussion by means of a farcical situation which is by no means impossible, ceases to be a problem as soon as it is frankly stated, and when stated is at once seen to be a complete clarification of the lives of four people and their two children. It is a play to cause wholesome reflection as well as laughter. The Equity Players of New York count this play as one of their big successes of the year

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1924. It ran for eight weeks to crowded houses. It appears in an abbreviated printed form in "The Best Plays of 1923-24." It has the criterion of popular success, with the added value of high literary merit. A royalty of \$25.00 payable in advance, is required for each amateur performance. **Price, 75 Cents.**

**BOSTON THEATRE GUILD PLAYS.** With an introduction by Frank W. C. Hersey, A.M., Instructor of English Harvard University. A collection of five plays. "The Three Gifts" by Florence Converse. 1 male, 3 females. "Desert Smoke," by Dwight L. Clarke. 4 males, 3 females. "An Old Chester Secret," by Sallie Kemper. 3 males, 2 females. "Dorinda Dares," by Angela Morris. 2 males, 2 females. "Buying Culture," by Antoinette Wood. 1 male, 2 females. These unusual plays have been selected because they were especially liked by the audiences which attended the first performances of them by the Theatre Guild of Boston. They differ in mood and purpose, they portray diverse groups of characters, and thus they produce a variety of effects. One of the plays is a realistic drama with mystical overtones, one a fantasy, one a domestic tragi-comedy, another a romantic comedy, another a farce. Indeed, these plays have that chief quality which is the basis of the hope for such success — they tell their story well and in terms of the theatre. Each has its own unity of tone and thus makes an impression not blurred by discordant elements. Each play develops a main situation — a situation not huddled and inarticulate, but amplified and vocal with emotion. During its six seasons, the Guild has presented about thirty-six plays — the five herein printed are the pick of the lot. Each play commands a five dollar production royalty — the volume, bound in a special library edition. **Price, \$1.25.**

**THREE ONE-ACT PLAYS.** By Mary Katherine Reely, with Introduction by Zona Gale. Contents: "Daily Bread," "A Window to the South," "Lean Years." "Daily life is in Miss Reely's plays, daily routine, daily crises. She has that for lack of which many a play of admirable material perishes — emotional appeal. One cannot even read these plays without being stirred to response, to definite participation. They deal with problems routed in human emotions. 'Daily Bread' must move everyone, but especially the socially awake. 'A Window to the South' must challenge all human sympathy but especially that of women, and especially that of rural women, farm women. Home, labor, love, pioneering — such interests speak and throb in the little plays. Miss Reely is a discovery." (Signed) Zona Gale.

We are keenly enthusiastic about the merits of these several plays and we anticipate that during the coming months little theatre groups scattered over the country will add them to their repertoire. **Price, \$1.00.**

**YALE PLAYCRAFTSMEN PLAYS.** By Lloyd F. Thanhauser. This volume contains four of the thirty or so one-act plays the Playcraftsmen have presented to date. Whatever merit they may have possessed before production has been greatly enhanced by the opportunity the author has had to experiment with, and so improve, his work in the Playcraftsmen Laboratory, and by the gracious and expert advice of the organization's faculty adviser, Professor Jack Randall Crawford. Contents: "The Biddie Sweeps Out," "The End of the Rope," "The Man Without a Head," "Trash." This latter play was awarded the Sloane dramatic prize for the best play by an undergraduate, Yale University, 1922. Each of these four plays is described in detail elsewhere in this catalogue. Refer to the alphabetical index. All of them are restricted from amateur production use under a five dollar royalty. The four plays complete in one volume, substantially bound. **\$1.25 per copy.**

**REVERIE.** By Percival Wilde. In "Reverie," the author has attempted to dramatize the beauty of the Christmas Spirit. Ex-Governor Richard Harkness, stern, aggressive, uncompromising: whose harshness has estranged his own children from him, sits at his lonely fire-place, too proud to admit that he is in the wrong. Then he sees something in the flames — the boy that he himself was sixty years ago — the boy and his childhood friends, and remarks that while "it's very nice to be always right — mostly, it isn't nice at all to be always right, — always." The cast includes important speaking parts for two men, one woman, and a boy — non-speaking parts for two men, and two women, and costume parts for seven or more children. The action of the play makes use of

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two or more dancers. The setting, an old-fashioned room, is simple. A tremendously effective play and one that has to its credit more successful productions than any Christmas play in our list. Its unusual story and its ease of production should commend itself to those groups that are constantly doing the better class of holiday plays. Royalty quoted on request. Bound in our library edition. Price, 75 Cents.

**THE TOY SHOP.** By Percival Wilde. The "Toy Shop" tells the story of Bobby and Betay lost in the toy shop on Christmas Eve. They sleep, and in their dream the toys on the bargain counter come to life; lament that they have not been sold, and in fantastic form reenact the drama of real life that has led Bobby and Betay into their predicament. The dream over, the toys are but toys again, but a new state of affairs which they have helped to bring about, promises for the future the happiness for which they have longed in the past. The cast of twelve or more characters includes parts for three men, or young men, — one woman, and eight or more children. There is ample opportunity for costuming and the scenes, one acted before a curtain and the other two in a simple interior, are not difficult. This is a play full of beauty and its production during the holiday season will be a high spot in your community. Royalty quoted on request. Bound in our library edition. Price, 75 Cents.

**FOLK LORE FROM MAMMY DAYS.** By Mary Johnson Blackburn. The genuine black Mammy sleeps with her generation, and her songs are but echoes of a poetic past. We offer these songs and stories for the children of America who never knew the sweet and subtle charm of Mammy's voice. These are speaking pieces in verse and prose, and most of them are in the words of an actual Mammy who was nurse to the author. They are the real thing, straight from Georgia, and they have stood the test of many public readings to enthusiastic audiences. For those who are fond of Southern Lullabies there are about fifteen pieces which can be sung or crooned to music which is given at the end of the book. It is a collection which gives all the scope imaginable to the individual skill of the reciter, in music, expression, and acting. A capital collection of absolutely fresh material. Price, \$1.25 cloth bound.

**GUS ENFIELD: TOWN PROPERTY.** A Play in a Prologue and Three Acts for Male Characters. By Carl Webster Pierce. Thirteen male characters, one of which has no lines, and two in the prologue may double others in the play if desired. Scenery, a bare stage and two easy interiors. This play was written to order to take care of the demand for an all-male character play with a strong plot and characters that live. The story of Gus Enfield, abandoned when a baby on the steps of the Enfield Town Hall, and adopted by the town, is one of absorbing interest, containing strong dramatic situations with plenty of laughs skillfully interlarded. With the eyes of the whole town on him, — everyone proud of his character and ideals, Gus — "Town property" — confesses to a crime of which he is innocent for the sake of the peace of mind of the invalid mother of the real wrong-doer, for whose relentless uncle they both work, under the condition that the real culprit confess after the death of his mother, who has but a year or two to live. The play contains an unusual surprise for the audience, in that they actually take part in the play. This is the scene which occurs in Enfield Town Hall. They find themselves constituting the citizens at the annual town meeting, and various characters take part in the action from their midst. The parts of Gus and Frank present great opportunities for young actors. Cyrus Kent, a kind, sympathetic farmer and Jonas Lane, the stern, parsimonious banker offer strong character roles. Jack Brown, the town loafer; the Moderator of the meeting; the three selectmen; and others offer varied opportunities for acting and combine to make a story holding interest from start to finish. This play is especially recommended for all boys' schools or clubs as well as men's clubs. Price, 35 Cents.

**WELL I DECLARE.** A Farce for an All-Male Cast. By William J. Mitchell. Six characters. Scenery, a single easy interior. Playing time approximately forty minutes. A wonderful discovery is made in Chemistry by the professor. He finds that he is able to exchange the natures of men. He hires two men who are down and out and offers to pay them large sums to have the injection made

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in their blood. Here the fun begins. One of the men is a crook who hires another crook to appear as a reporter. While the experiment is in progress the Professor is robbed of valuable rubies. But he double-crosses his men by substituting fake stones, and they double-cross him by substituting another liquor for the professor's fluid. The crooks and fools are all shown up, and the crowd has a hearty laugh in the comic process. It is a broad farce and can be acted almost ad lib. **Price, 30 Cents.**

**OFF WITH HIS HEAD.** By Katharine Hatch. The One Act Play "OFF WITH HIS HEAD" gives every Latin student an opportunity of knowing such characters as the Honorable Mr. Possum Posse Potui and his little slave, Complimentary Infinitive; the Three Wisemen, Verbs of Saying, Thinking and Knowing and poor old Indirect Discourse, who limps after them; Mr. Sum Esse Fui, who, contrary to all established precedents persists in neglecting his faithful follower, Miss Predicate Nominative, to run after Miss Accusative Case; the King of Latin Land, himself, who dooms his subjects who break a rule, with the dire words, "Off with his head!" and the Ablative of Separation, who performs the execution. There are forty-four in the cast, any of which, except the four or five principal characters may be left out and the thread of the play remain unbroken. It would succeed with only twenty or less. The costumes are as one would imagine them. They may be simple or elaborate, providing each character wears something distinctive of his personality. The play is not only interesting to those who have studied Latin but to those who have never known the language. It is well adapted to classroom interpretation. Its value, in vitalizing the fundamental Latin constructions cannot be overestimated.

**Price, 25 Cents.**

**CHARLOTTE'S RUSE.** Light Comedy in One Act. By LeRoy Phillips. 2 males, 2 females. Scene, an easy interior. Plays 25 minutes. Can the old time—"latchstring always out," hospitality survive in modern city apartments? The theme suggests humorous domestic complications. Visiting friends and relatives, who have swamped the tiny flat of Charlotte and Arthur Hoppin, have departed. But a bolt, out of the blue, shatters their hope for well-earned tranquility. Arthur's cousin, half forgotten by him, unknown to Charlotte, wires—"You may get me before you get this telegram!" Precipitate flight is imperative! By a quick dash they escape just in time to avoid Cousin Albert's entrance. Thinking he is ahead of his telegram, Albert, aided by Blanche, the colored maid, discovers the destination of his departing cousins. To overtake them by automobile is an easy matter. How Charlotte and Arthur melt when Albert proves a thoroughbred, and how they return to their tiny city flat with a victorious visitor are among the laughter provoking incidents of this brisk comedy. Blanche, the colored maid, is an important character part and can be stressed as much as desired. Another local setting can be substituted for that suggested by the author.

**Price, 30 Cents.**

**THE CROWNING GLORY.** A One-Act Comedy for one male and 5 female characters. By Edna A. Collamore. Simple costumes. Kitchen interior. Playing time, 25 minutes. Miss Emily spends the birthday money given her by her favorite nephew for the gay hat she has craved since her drab girlhood. It is a mail order hat and her critics find it ridiculous. Her nephew's tactful sweetheart saves the hat and the situation. An Old-Home-Week play with sympathetic character study, humor, suspense and a pleasing conclusion. Suitable for women's clubs, church organizations, or summer colonies. Recommended especially to those groups who have produced and liked, "Joint Owners in Spain," "The Neighbors" and "The Florist Shop."

**Price, 25 Cents.**

**THE CURE-ALL.** A Farce in One Act. By J. C. McMullen. 3 male and 3 female characters. Scenery, a single easy interior. Playing time approximately 40 minutes. Two elderly country people are brought together by means of a cure-all invented by a niece and her lover. The quarrel of the old people prevents the marriage and holds back the inheritance of the lovers. Each despises the medicine by which the other sets great store. Each claims the house in which they both live, and which they divide between them by a white painted

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line across the exact middle of the middle room, and over which neither will step. The quarrel is ended by the marvelous qualities of the niece's cure-all. They both take it and begin to compare notes about it and come together as a result. It is a short snappy act, easy to stage and is a scream from start to finish. **Price, 25 Cents.**

**THE FALCON AND THE LADY.** By Margaret Penney. 2 men, 3 women. The old world atmosphere of a mouldering Italian courtyard, and the feudal devotion of the two servitors of the hero, form picturesque background for this present-day romance of a young Italian nobleman. It is the Count's final sacrifice for the beautiful American he loves, which gives birth to a new interpretation of her character while revealing what lies beneath the flippant mask of another woman. A pretty divorcee from Kansas City, who breezes through the tragedy of disillusion like a breath from the New World, brings humor and sparkle to a play which adapts itself to production out-of-doors in a garden as well as upon the stage of a Little Theatre. **Price, 35 Cents.**

**FOLLOW SUIT.** Light Comedy in One Act. By LeRoy Phillips. 2 males, 2 females. Scene, an easy interior. Plays 25 minutes. One of those diverting domestic dilemmas to which audiences universally respond. A dinner invitation has been given by Rita and John and accepted by Mary and Dick. Rita, as hostess, is a stickler for form and ceremony, but is not sure of her guests:—Will they consider it an informal affair or will they come in evening dress? She prepares for every contingency. The lightning change act, by which she contrives to get a reluctant husband into a tail coat, immaculate stiff shirt, white waistcoat and white tie, to correspond with the faultless evening clothes of the arriving guests, is a test of resourcefulness and determination. The lines are crisp, clever and clean. The action is full of dash. The situations are as novel as they are humorous. In their swift development, each of the four characters has an equal share. **Price, 30 Cents.**

**ISN'T IT EXCITING?** A Farcical Interlude in Two Short Episodes. By Rupert F. Jones. 4 males, 1 female. Time of playing, about 30 minutes. Scene, any simple interior. A wife loves the movies and a husband loves Darwin. She compares her spouse with Bill Hart, greatly to the disadvantage of the former, especially as to his handling of a gun. He decides to show her something, by expelling, at the mouth of a revolver, a friend to be disguised as a burglar. This would have worked out admirably had not a real burglar arrived first. Friend husband is finally left with a bad job of explaining on his hands. Quick moving, light in tempo, constantly entertaining, distinctly actable and well within the scope of amateurs. **Price, 25 Cents.**

**JERRY.** A Comedy in One Act. By Celia E. Shute. 2 males and 2 females. Scene, an easy interior. Playing time about 40 minutes. Each character has a "star" part. It is a rousing comedy with a hearty laugh at every turn. It inevitably recalls the famous mix-up in "Charley's Aunt," and while much shorter, is in its own way quite as funny. A family resemblance suggests an impersonation by a nephew of his rich old aunt who is supposed to have missed her train. This results in ridiculous complications when the aunt turns up unexpectedly while the nephew is fooling the family. It is all good clean fun, with a happy ending, and is an unusual opportunity for smart acting. **Price, 25 Cents.**

**MAN UNDER THE BED.** A Farce-Comedy in One Act. By Katharine Metcalf Roof. A short comedy of youth with a real plot, giving a new angle upon a popular theme. An episode in the room of a closed country house having all the piquancy, without the impropriety of the bedroom farce. Full of suspense and amusing turns, with an unexpected twist at the end. Cast for two young girls and a man. Can be set in any room having a window at the back. **Price, 30 Cents.**

**OTHER PEOPLE'S HUSBANDS.** By Margaret Penney. 4 males, 6 females. A friendly comedy with people in it one would like as friends—with healthy, spontaneous laughter bubbling out of situation and line, as the attractive heroine decides in a moment of very human revolt, that she will no longer live up to her

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honorably acquired reputation as a safe and sane companion for her married friends' husbands. A play that the actors enjoy as much as the audience. Set in a homelike living room, in the present day, and playing almost an hour, it presents no difficulties of production by amateurs and contains nothing risqué except the title. **Price, 35 Cents.**

**SAVING THE SITUATION.** A Comedy of Family Life. By Rosa S. Harris. 2 males, 3 females. One very easy interior. Playing time, 20 minutes. The cares of a busy household coupled with her activities as a club-woman, have driven Mrs. Whiting almost to the point of distraction. Her difficulties with Bridget, the cook, threaten to divide the family against itself, when Harold comes to the rescue and makes a sincere but ludicrous attempt to solve the servant problem. Although his effort fails in a rather surprising fashion, it was not wholly in vain as the wind-up of this bright little farce proves. There are few mothers in whose heart this play will not strike a responsive chord. It not only is very amusing, but it also carries with it a wholesome moral for fathers, sons and daughters. **Price, 25 Cents.**

**WHEN IT'S SPRING.** A Comedy in One Act. By Phoebe Hoffman. 2 males and 1 female. Playing time, approximately 15 minutes. In the Spring, a young man's fancy is apt to turn to most anything except business. This explains why Edwin Vener, who is normally a clever business man, shows up to such disadvantage. Dorothy Forsythe, an up-to-date book agent, happens to catch him while he is in that state of coma called "spring fever," and the situation is hers. She makes a favorable impression — presents her prospectus, and delivers her argument despite the entirely irrelevant interruptions, and reaches the "sign on the dotted line" stage when the Janitor appears for a dramatic moment. Edwin is given the opportunity to play the hero and the curtain falls when he is signing the dotted line for life. Written by the author of "Martha's Mourning." We recommend this curtain raiser as "sure to please" even the most exacting audience. **Price, 25 Cents.**

**THE KILLER.** A Comedy Drama in One Act. By Albert Cowles. 3 males, 1 female. Simple setting. The story of a MOUNTED MAN of the Northwest Mounted Police — one who, following the well known traditions of that sturdy band of men, stuck on the job until HE GOT HIS MAN. A "CAMEO" comedy drama of such high merit in characterization and dramatic construction that it has been rightly termed, "The best of all one-act plays." The actors are given an opportunity to run the gamut of emotions with laughter and suspense as the highlights. It is a veritable cocktail of laughs, thrills and surprises. No author has ever blended comedy, pathos and climactic surprises so successfully. "THE KILLER" once seen will never be forgotten. It was originally produced and played by an all-star cast at a Lambs Club Gambol at the Lambs Club House in New York City where it was an instantaneous KNOCKOUT. Later it was produced and played by William Faversham in Vaudeville with a cast of unusual excellence. **Royalty \$5.00. Price, 35 Cents.**

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# BAKER'S PLAYS

*for Amateurs*

## Are You Ready For An Air Raid?

By  
MATILDA CLEMENT

Price, 35 Cents



WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

BOSTON  
MASSACHUSETTS

LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA



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### BAKER'S PLAYS

BOSTON,  
MASSACHUSETTS

LOS ANGELES,  
CALIFORNIA

*Printed in the United States of America*

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# **Are You Ready For An Air Raid?**

**A Defense Play in One Act**

By  
**MATILDA CLEMENT**



**BAKER'S PLAYS**

**178 TREMONT STREET  
BOSTON, MASS.**

and

**448 SO. HILL STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CAL.**



*Time magazine*

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# Are You Ready For An Air Raid?

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## CHARACTERS

MOTHER, *Mrs. Dunn.*

JEAN, *her daughter, a young girl in high school.*

CYNTHIA

GWEN

ANNE

CLARK

TONY

BILL

DAN

} *Jean's friends who give her a lesson  
on A. R. P.*

TIME: An afternoon in December, 1941.

PLACE: Living room in Jean's home, Everett, Massachusetts.

ORIGINAL CASTS  
for  
ARE YOU READY FOR AN AIR RAID?

This play was first presented by two groups from The Dramatic Class of Everett Senior High School, Everett, Massachusetts. These groups were known as Victory and Liberty Casts and took turns in making public appearances. For instance, the Liberty Cast might present the play for a church group on a Thursday afternoon and the Victory Cast, for a Parent Teachers' Meeting on Thursday evening. The original casts:

HELEN WHITE	GRACE FULLUM
LILLIAN HENKEN	MARJORIE RAY
GEORGE MOORE	RITA TRABUCCO
RITA JAGIELLO	MARY McELENNEY
THELMA HILTZ	CARMELLA PETRICCA
VIRGINIA HERNE	MARILYN SILVERSTEIN
FRANK JOHNSON	DOUGLAS WETHERBY
EDWARD GROIPEN	LOUIS HERY
WILLIAM DEVEAU	

The Class is greatly indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Max W. Koetter for their interest and help in this production.

## STORY OF THE PLAY

A group of students who are taking a course in Air Raid Precaution bring a résumé of their lessons into the home of one of their pals. Many phases of A. R. P. are brought into effective dramatization as it makes real the routine work and responsibilities of home defense workers. From manuscript this play was presented at two senior high schools, two junior high schools, a church and a Kiwanis Club, winning unanimous approval from these varied audiences. A radio presentation added momentum to its rapid-growing popularity and speeded it on its patriotic tour of instruction through dramatic entertainment.

## DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

MRS. DUNN is a woman of about forty years of age. Her speech at the beginning of play is meant to have a quieting effect upon her daughter who is recovering from an illness. At close of the play, she shows her real feeling regarding the war. She wears a dark afternoon dress and later, a winter hat, coat, gloves, etc.

JEAN is a typical high school girl of seventeen years. She is quite positive in her opinions, a good student, and popular with her schoolmates. She may wear a school dress. The rug or blanket thrown over her knees suggests the invalid.

All other characters wear school clothes. It is inferred that they remove their outer wraps in the hall before entering the living room.

CYNTHIA is dramatic and may over-act a trifle.

GWEN may be of the flirtatious type.

ANNE is vain, makes frequent use of lipstick, compact, etc.

CLARK is mature and takes the initiative.

TONY is the boyish, mischievous type.

BILL is a good-natured, easy-going boy who appreciates his own humor.

DAN is quiet, considerate, and very studious.

## PROPERTIES

Mask.

On table magazines, cards, paper, pen, pencils, notebook.

Labels, Scotch tape, fasteners.

Defense stamp books.

Bond.

Bleaching fluid.

Sponge.

Nail polish.

Two blankets, one for Jean, one on couch.

Horse-radish.

Perfume—apple blossom.

Fly paper.

Bicycle pump.

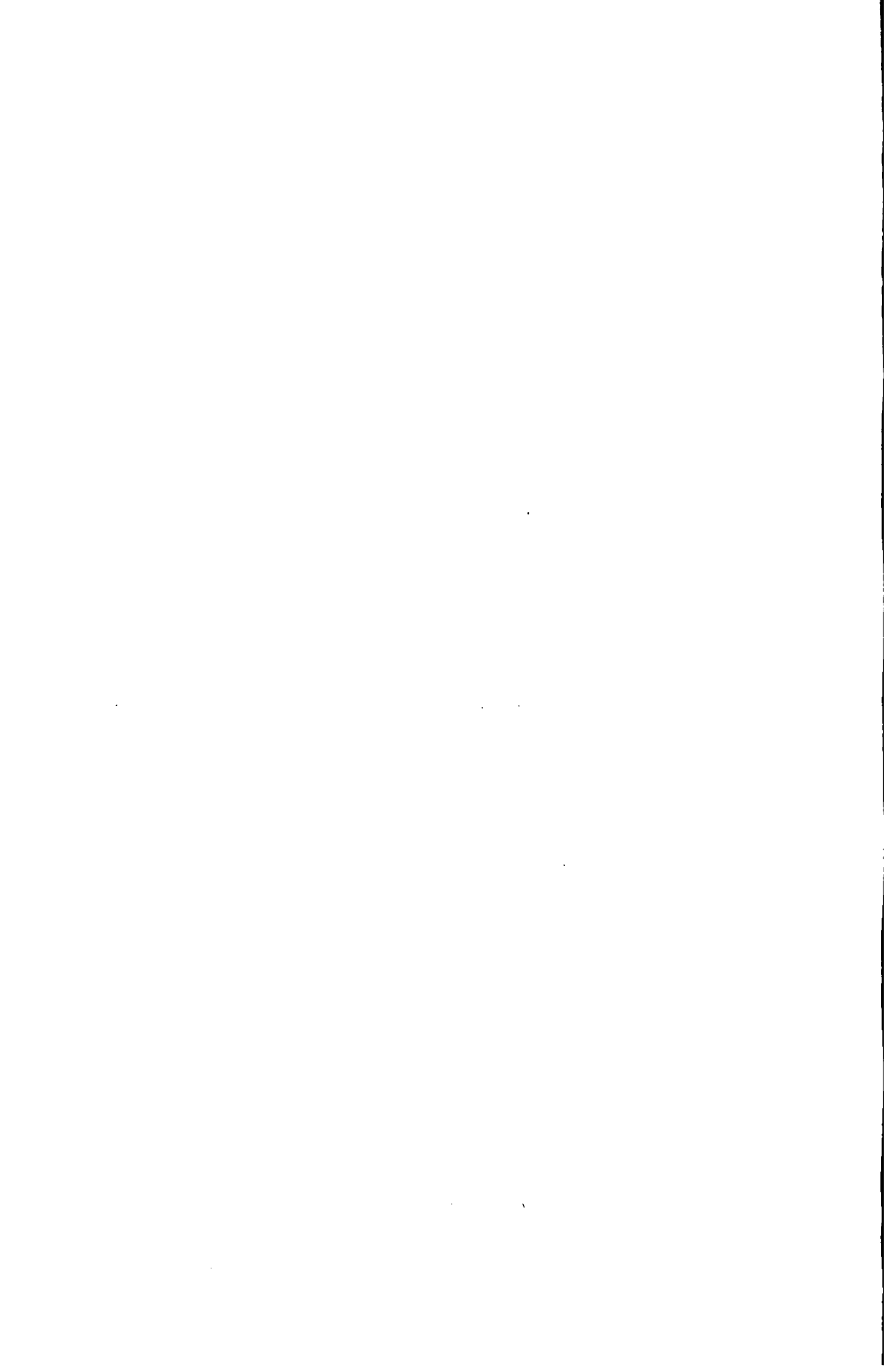
Waste basket.

Geranium.

Package, string, etc., on table.

Compact, lipstick.





## Are You Ready For An Air Raid?

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(*As curtain rises* JEAN and her mother are discovered chatting. MOTHER is finishing tying up a sweater which she has knit for the Red Cross. JEAN is reading a magazine story on Air Raids in London which has greatly impressed her. She is reclining in comfortable chair R. C. with shawl over her knees. There is a chair at her R. Her mother is at table L., waste paper basket near table L. There is a couch L. C., end tables, and bookcases to make the room home-like. JEAN finishes her story and drops magazine onto end table at her L.)

JEAN. Mother, I think it's just terrible.

MOTHER. (*As she works on bundle*) What's so terrible, dear?

JEAN. Have you read this story called (*she looks up title*) *Love à la Mode*?

MOTHER. *Love à la Mode*? No, dear, but it sounds like a harmless enough little love story.

JEAN. Well, it isn't. It's—it's dreadful. I don't see how they stand it!

MOTHER. (*Smiling*) What, love?

JEAN. Mother, it's really no laughing matter. I think the English are the bravest people I ever heard of.

MOTHER. (*Crosses R. Looking over JEAN's shoulder*) Oh, is it an English story? Yes, they need all we can do for them. Aren't we knitting sweaters, sending—

JEAN. (*Interrupting*) But, Mother, it isn't fair. This girl prepared three homes for the one she loved and before he returned from war, every one of them was bombed—totally destroyed.

MOTHER. (*Absent minded*) Very sad, of course. (*Returns to chair L., begins to knit.*)

JEAN. (*Indignantly*) Sad? It's—it's not civilized. No wonder they are giving air raid lessons at school —

MOTHER. (*Calmly*) Yes, so I heard. It seems rather a waste of time, doesn't it?

JEAN. A waste of time? You should read this story. I think it's time we learned —

MOTHER. (*Soothingly*) Now, dear, don't get excited. You know you are still weak —

JEAN. Yes, yes, but I'm going back to school next week, and I know I'll never get my work made up—my senior year, too.

MOTHER. Don't worry, dear. I've talked with your teachers and everything will be all right.

JEAN. Well, I guess you'd worry, Mother. I've missed nearly all of that A. R. P. work, too.

MOTHER. (*Vaguely*) A. R. P.?

JEAN. Yes, you know, dear—*Air Raid Precaution*.

MOTHER. Oh, that's what they call it. Forget it, dear. Your father says it's all bunk.

JEAN. Bunk?

MOTHER. Yes; you see, Hitler will never get over here—too far—why worry? It's really too bad to stir everyone up so. Why, even your brother is all excited about it—wasn't a bit interested in the mask I bought him for the masquerade party—threw it on the couch. (*Nods to mask on couch.*)

JEAN. Yes, I know, Mother. He was due at a Scout Station; he said they were practicing for an air attack.

MOTHER. More foolishness. Who's afraid of an air attack? It's all child's play.

JEAN. Who's afraid? I am.

(*Doorbell rings.*)

MOTHER. I wonder who that can be. (*MOTHER goes out c. to answer it. Voices heard.*)

JEAN. Child's play! I hope so, but this story —

(*Crowd of young people breeze in exchanging greetings with JEAN who is delighted to see them, as MOTHER enters, followed by others.*)

MOTHER. (*To JEAN*) All these friends to see you, dear. [*Exit R.*]

CYNTHIA. (*As she goes down R. to JEAN*) Hi, Jean, you're shamming, not sick at all.

JEAN. (*Laughing*) Hello, everybody, but it's grand seeing you all.

GWEN. Whew, it's hot here. (*Sits on couch.*)

ANNE. (*Sitting in chair R. of JEAN*) Oh, Jean, you're lucky. You ought to see the homework we have to do tonight.

JEAN. (*Disconsolately*) Does that worry me—think of all I'll have to make up. (*Sighs.*)

BILL. (*Standing R. of ANNE*) You're about as tactful as —

CYNTHIA. (*Standing between JEAN and ANNE*) We had an assembly today—you should have seen the violinist. (*Picks up magazine, glancing at pictures.*)

GWEN. (*On couch rolling her eyes*) I fell in love with him at first sight.

CLARK. (*With disgust*) Then she took a second look.

(*All laugh except DAN, who sits reading at L. of table.*)

JEAN. (*Noticing DAN*) Dan, you're quiet today.

BILL. (*Laughing*) He's the still life of the party. (*To ANNE.*) Pretty good, ha? Still life. (*Enjoys own joke.*)

TONY. (*As DAN glares at BILL*) Now, you're getting an eye lashing, old boy. (*TONY has spied mask on couch and is trying it on as he sits on couch with GWEN.*)

DAN. (*Turning to JEAN*) I never can get a word in sledge-wise with this crowd.

(*MOTHER enters from L. dressed for street*)

MOTHER. Now that Jean has company for a while, I'm going to slip down to the Red Cross with this sweater. (*CLARK takes sweater to door C. and passes it to her.*) Good-bye. [*Exit.*]

(*Group responds as CLARK returns to group.*)

JEAN. Poor Mother, I guess she'll be glad when I get back to school. My illness has been hard on her, too. You see, I can't help worrying —

BILL. Worry? What do you have to worry about, Miss Honor Student?

(*All chime in with, "I say so too." "What an idea," etc.*)

JEAN. Well, to tell the truth, it's A. R. P. work that gets me going worst.

ANNE. Yes, you missed all that, haven't you?

CYNTHIA. That's so.

CLARK. Say, kids, I have an idea. (*Rises, but TONY pulls him back.*)

TONY. Hold everything!

DAN. Not really?

CLARK. (*Unruffled*) Let's give Jean a series of lessons on A. R. P.

JEAN. Grand!

BILL. That is an idea if you know enough to.

ANNE. Between us all we ought to be able to dope it out.

DAN. I've been cramming for the exam. I like the stuff. (*Takes notebook from pocket.*) I've carried these notes for a week.

CLARK. Great! We'll probably need them.

GWEN. Who'll start?

(*All shout in a roar "I will."*)

CLARK. (*With uplifted hand*) Pipe down, you numb-skulls. Don't you know Jean's been sick?

DAN. You're right, Clark. It's your idea. You direct this job.

(*Chorus of "Sure, go ahead." "We're ready," etc.*)

CLARK. (*Modestly*) Oh, no — (*They urge him. He crosses to c. facing JEAN.*) Well, Jean, we'll make it a conversation.

CYNTHIA. Let's be practical. Now, (*slowly*) what do

you think you'd do if you saw a bomb burning on the roof of your porch?

JEAN. (*Smiling*) Well, first and easiest thing would be to pour a bucket of water — (*All shout "No!"*) JEAN, *thoughtfully*.) We have a fire extinguisher in the hall —

(*All shout "No!" again.*)

DAN. (*Definitely*) All that will put it out, Jean, is *dry sand*.

ANNE. That's one lesson—nothing but dry sand, over, and all around it.

GWEN. You haven't told her what a bomb looks like yet.

TONY. (*Taking magazine from table, rolling it*) It's about this size, Jean.

BILL. It's light, has a metal tail.

CYNTHIA. It has thermit inside.

JEAN. A what? A fur mit?

CYNTHIA. (*Smiling*) No, dear, not a fur mit, t-h-e-r-m-i-t—thermit.

JEAN. Oh,—thermit—new word for *me*.

DAN. New to all of us, Jean. You know it has a tremendous heat and begins to burn, throwing bits of magnesium casing many feet.

TONY. Yes, it sets many fires at once and destroys a lot of property.

BILL. They say one plane can carry as many as 2000 of these kilo bombs.

JEAN. What kind—I thought —

GWEN. Another name for incendiary bomb.

JEAN. Dan, please pass me that notebook and pencil—I'll take some of this down. (*DAN passes notebook and pencil to JEAN who takes shorthand notes throughout the lesson.*)

ANNE. (*Powdering her nose*) Don't forget the bread basket and jumping-jack.

JEAN. (*Laughing*) What *are* you talking about, Anne?

CLARK. No, she's right, Jean, there are other kinds of bombs, too.

DAN. Those Germans are some inventors. They say the

Molotoff (*spells it for JEAN who is taking notes*) is a large bomb which contains smaller ones. They scatter themselves over large areas—over fields—food-supplies—

CYNTHIA. (*Looking over JEAN's shoulder*) And jumping-jacks are the kind of bombs that jump at people who try to put them out. (*JEAN laughs, seems incredulous.*) Really, Jean.

CLARK. Now, Jean, let's hear your lessons. What have we taught you so far?

JEAN. All right, teacher. In a nutshell—An incendiary or kilo bomb is about nine feet long and two feet in diameter. (*All shout "No, nine inches long, two inches in diameter" as JEAN corrects herself and continues.*) It has thermit inside which gets very hot and burns the magnesium casing. That scatters the magnesium and makes many fires.

DAN. And how do you control these burning bits of magnesium, young lady?

JEAN. (*Thinking*) Not—not—use dry sand.

BILL. Sure, remember that thermit doesn't need oxygen, but will burn under sand so you're not really safe in just covering it.

DAN. You have to shovel it up and place it on sand.

JEAN. I remember—have sand all around it. And one plane carries two thousand of these beastly things?

TONY. You're right. Think of the mess they make, too.

JEAN. Then I have the Molotoff bread basket and jumping-jack in my notes.

CLARK. What say, folks, shall we go on?

ALL. Sure—why not?

BILL. I may be able to pass that exam myself if we keep at this.

CLARK. Well, then, let's start with the attic. You remember, Jean, what the firemen all tell us when they speak in assembly?

TONY. Fireman, save my child.

JEAN. About throwing away old magazines, newspapers, keeping stairs clear, etc.?

BILL. That's it. They say it's a good idea to put a layer of dry sand on the attic floor.

ANNE. Don't forget to have pails of sand in the attic and on the second floor.

TONY. And a stirrup pump is handy.

JEAN. What's that?

DAN. Well, it's a little hand pump. Didn't I see your brother's bicycle pump when I came in?

TONY. Here it is, Dan. (*Carries bicycle pump to DAN.*)

DAN. It works something like this. (*He takes a waste paper basket and pump.*) Pretend this is a pail of water, the stirrup pump is placed inside, there's a hose — (*He illustrates using basket as pail.*)

CLARK. That's right; one person pumps the water with his foot, the other grabs the garden hose which might be 15 to 30 feet long and sprays a small stream on the fire, while the third keeps the pail filled with water.

ANNE. I choose to hold the hose, please.

CYNTHIA. And when you are working in the attic before an air raid, be sure to keep the doors and windows closed.

TONY. When you jump from the window, don't face out but —

JEAN. (*Anxiously*) Oh, do I *have* to jump out the window?

CYNTHIA. Silly, course not, only if you should *have* to, hold on to the window, facing the house, and drop, if there's no net. It's much safer.

JEAN. Oh —

ANNE. It doesn't sound so safe to me.

BILL. Make a note that in a fire the air near the floor is purer, so crawl on the floor, see?

JEAN. (*Busily taking notes*) Yes, yes.

CLARK. Let the girl breathe for a second. We'll plan what comes next.

DAN. She ought to know about gas masks.

BILL. Yes, everyone in England has to carry one, they say.

TONY. But they haven't had to use them in this war yet.

CLARK. Yet—you've said it.



CYNTHIA. Too bad we haven't a gas mask here to show you.

ANNE. They had one at school; you've probably seen pictures of them, Jean.

JEAN. Yes, but I couldn't describe one.

DAN. Well, let's pretend this is (*picks up basket again*) one.

BILL. (*Laughing*) It was a pail a minute ago.

DAN. What of it? What's your imagination for?

CLARK. Go on, Dan. Don't let him kid you.

DAN. There are three kinds of masks. (*JEAN takes notes.*) Civilian, all people; civilian duty, for wardens; military—to be used many hours.

TONY. And there are all sizes.

DAN. There are three parts. (*Holds up basket.*) The canister (*c-a-n-i-s-t-e-r*). That's made of activated charcoal, (*girls may hum "Hum and Strum" radio song, if desired*) soda and lime and it filters smoke. (*Chatter.*)

CLARK. Shut up, kids, let him finish.

DAN. (*Resumes*) Then there's the face piece. (*Puts his hand outside of basket, illustrating.*) The eye-glass should be treated with anti-dim to keep it from misting —

CYNTHIA. But if you lose your anti-dim, try soap.

JEAN. But you said there were three parts. I have canister and face piece —

DAN. The third is the *head harness* which holds it on.

JEAN. Thank you. You have no idea how relieved I am to be getting some of this work done.

TONY. They might ask about the *care* of the mask.

BILL. I think I remember that—It should be kept in a dark, cool place, must not be banged.

ANNE. (*Primly*) And after using, it should be put in the sun, and washed with soap and water.

GWEN. (*Smiling*) You did hear part of that lecture, didn't you, dear? (*To JEAN.*) She was flirting outrageously with the boy across the aisle.

TONY. Come now, girls, you know so much about it, what do you do with the mask if it's contaminated?

(*Girls all concentrate.*)

ANNE. Bake it.

BOYS. *No.*

GWEN. (*Brightly*) Bury it.

(*Boys shout "No."*)

CYNTHIA. Boil it.

BOYS. No! That would ruin it.

DAN. Jean, put down in your notes—if contaminated, the gas mask should be weathered for twenty-four hours or sent to the warden.

(*Other boys, "Right!"*)

JEAN. Thank you. But you just mentioned the warden. Who's he?

CLARK. The WARDEN is a very important person, young lady. They have already been selected and trained in this city.

BILL. You're not telling her *who* he is, Clark.

CLARK. (*Ignoring the suggestion*) He has so many duties.

TONY. In the first place, he has charge of a certain section of a city called a *sector*—get it?

DAN. Sure, we get it.

JEAN. Yes—— (*Engrossed with her notes.*)

DAN. He instructs groups in his sector in the use of gas masks, making shelters, and blackout preparations.

CYNTHIA. During a raid, he looks for fires, unexploded bombs, casualties——

ANNE. Gives first aid, sees that people leave home if unexploded bombs are about——

JEAN. Not so fast—my shorthand isn't so good.

DAN. He must know people in his sector, how many in each house——

TONY. Each house is supposed to have a slate hung out by the door giving information regarding number of occupants, whether any old people or invalids, etc.

JEAN. What do they want to know that for?

CLARK. When they have to dig them out, they naturally want to know when they have them all.

DAN. Civilians must be trained to obey wardens, help them store stretchers, let them know of available rooms for first aid and "tell warden all."

BILL. Some job, I'd say. But we haven't said anything about bomb shelters—— I was absent the day we had that.

JEAN. Then you'd better take notes, too.

BILL. Good idea. (*Fishes paper, pencil from pocket.*)

CYNTHIA. I remember we learned the best shelter was in a cellar under stairs at back of building where earth is soft.

ANNE. Be sure to take an ax, a saw, a crowbar, and picks and shovels with you so you can dig out.

GWEN. Keep a supply of food and water—about a week's supply of tinned fruit juice, milk, they told us.

CYNTHIA. Yes, they mentioned having a radio, games, blankets, first aid kit—what else?

(ANNE is using lipstick.)

BILL. How about light?

CLARK. You are supposed to have matches, candles, flashlight.

TONY. Pencils, paper—blankets—gee, did anyone say blankets?

CYNTHIA. Yes, I did.

DAN. And take your gas masks, children.

JEAN. (*Struggling with notes*) There's surely an awful lot to this thing.

CLARK. But the worst is yet to come.

JEAN. You mean something *harder*?

BILL. You bet; the gases are the toughest part.

DAN. Don't scare the girl to death before we start.

CYNTHIA. I just know I'll never be able to pass that part.

TONY. I heard some of the teachers, even, flunked that.

CLARK. Hold on—let's get organized again.

ANNE. I'm taking notes on this—maybe I'll absorb something a second time.

BILL. If you can forget the lipstick for a few minutes, my child.

ANNE. I'll bet you are not so hot on this yourself, smarty.

DAN. I've been wondering if we couldn't demonstrate the use, treatment, etc., of gases.

CLARK. That's an idea. What's the sense of belonging to the Dramatic Class if we can't put over a little stunt like this?

DAN. Listen, everybody—Jean, do you mind if the girls go on a—a treasure hunt?

JEAN. Treasure hunt! What do you mean?

DAN. Well, we need a few things for our stunt. I think they may be found in your kitchen and bedroom.

JEAN. Of course, they may go wherever they like.

DAN. You girls hunt the odors. (JEAN *looks mystified* as CYNTHIA and GWEN go out R. to kitchen and ANNE goes L. to bedroom.) Now, Tony, Bill, and I will work over here, while Clark prepares Jean for demonstration.

CLARK. I don't know just what Dan wants me to do. He seems to be running the show but here goes. First of all — (He sits R. of JEAN and slowly as though thinking the thing out, begins to explain while the other boys are working quietly at table cutting out small cards labeled CN, CNS—[DA-DM on one card] PS-CL. At top of CN, CNS [DA-DM] they fasten Scotch tape. On PS and CL they fasten fasteners. This work has really been done before but they seem to be doing it.) Gases have not been used in this war as yet but we should be informed about them just in case.

JEAN. Did you have a definition for a gas?

CLARK. Yes, we did, Jean, if I can remember it. A gas is any chemical, liquid, solid, or vapor used in war — There's more to it — Hey, Dan, remember that definition for gas?

DAN. Sure, any chemical, solid, liquid or vapor —

CLARK. We have that much —

DAN. (Continuing) Used in war for its poisonous and irritant effects on the human body — I think that's all, Clark.

CLARK. Thank you. (DAN resumes work with boys.) I know we can't go into all the different kinds because—well, I haven't my notes but I know there's *tear* gas, a

lacrimator—(as JEAN looks up he explains) just another name for *tear gas*, *lacrimator*; then the kind that affects the nose, the *sternutator*; the *lung* or *lethal* — Now, I'm stuck; oh, yes I know this was my idea but remember, Jean, I suggested a conversation and it is turning out to be a filibuster — (They laugh.) Dan, S. O. S.!

DAN. (Modestly) What's the matter? (Turns to BILL.) Bill, you just finish that, will you?

CLARK. We need your help. I know *lacrimator*, *sternutator*, *lethal* but what the deuce are the others?

DAN. (Swelling with pride) Now, am I glad I crammed for that exam! There are three more, Jean, the *vesicant*, the gas that blisters skin and lungs, the *paralytant*, and the smoke or *SCREENING* gas. Most of them are non-persistent; that is, they last only about ten minutes.

(Laughter of girls heard and CYNTHIA and GWEN return R. bringing bottles of shoe polish, horse-radish, a geranium plant, bleaching fluid, and fly paper. JEAN looks puzzled.)

CYNTHIA. Didn't we do well?

GWEN. I certainly had a hard time finding this bleaching fluid, down in the cellar.

(ANNE enters from L. with bottle of apple blossom perfume, wet sponge, and nail polish.)

ANNE. Well, here I am with my treasures, sir.

DAN. You realize this is only a rehearsal, Jean. We could do better maybe another time.

JEAN. No excuse now, Dan.

DAN. (At C.) This may be harder than I bargained for. Here, Tony. (TONY comes to C. and DAN fastens mask over his face.) Now, Jean, we have been making these labels for gases. The ones that affect the eyes we'll place near the eyes, the one affecting the nose, near the nose, etc. See? I think it will make it easier for you. Ladies and gentlemen, the gentlemen on my left will now help to demonstrate the lacrimator or tear gas. (Fastens

CN to eye of mask.) My assistant will release the odor of apple blossom. (*She does so.*) This is the odor of CN gas, the tear gas affecting the eyes. Anne, the victim, will respond properly — (*She weeps, allowing water to drop from sponge as though coming from her eyes.*) When thus afflicted, the victim must be taken to fresh air for relief. (*BILL assists her to window or door.*) Now, Gwen, if you will be our next victim. Jean, when you smell nail polish, you may know that CNS gas is in the air. (*Fastens CNS to other eye on mask.*) Notice that it also affects the eyes. (*ANNE returns quietly to group.*) Note how the victim reacts in this case —

GWEN. (*With hands before eyes*) I'm blind, blind!

DAN. Not so, calm yourself; it is but tear gas and a dash of wind in your eyes is all you need. (*DAN takes GWEN to window.*) As you see DA and DM affect the nose and are, therefore, *sternutators*. (*Fastens card [DA-DM] on nose of mask.*) The victim stands here. (*ANNE takes position.*) She gets a whiff of — (*DAN holds bottle of shoe polish under ANNE'S nose. ANNE responds "shoe polish."*) Note the reaction. (*ANNE sneezes, holds head. As she sneezes, GWEN returns.*) And the cure? Yes, fresh air. You should have had your mask on. (*ANNE goes to window.*) My assistant will now carry on—Clark!

CLARK. Ladies and gentlemen, you have seen the annoying effects of the *tear* and *nose* gases. The *lung* gases are much more serious. The two we shall mention first are CL and PS. (*Gives CYNTHIA and JEAN smell of bleaching fluid. JEAN immediately says "Chlorine gas!"*) CLARK fastens CL over TONY'S lung.)

CYNTHIA. (*Sinking on couch*) Chlorine gas—it burns my throat and nostrils. A gas mask, quick.

(*They hold basket over her head; cover her with blanket.*)

CLARK. She should be taken to the hospital. The other lethal or lung gas, PS. (*CLARK fastens PS over TONY'S other lung.*) Anne, the victim, gets a whiff of sweet smelling fly paper. (*Gives her a smell.*) Beware! It may not be as innocent as it seems. Ah, PS—a gas mask. Keep her

flat, quiet, and warm! (*She lies on couch.* CLARK, *laughing.*) Our CL patient is cured which shows what can be done when civilians recognize the odors and act quickly.

(ANNE *sits up on couch.*)

ANNE. (*Sighing*) That was a narrow escape. I got the mask on just in time.

BILL. (*To DAN*) Thank you, Dan. I feel better about taking that exam now.

DAN. You might make a note of this, too, Jean, the odor of musty hay for CG, odor of matches for white phosphorus or WP smoke, and the acrid odor for sulphur trioxide or FS smoke.

CLARK. (*As he looks at geranium*) Looking at geranium reminds me that we've neglected horse-radish and geraniums.

TONY. It would be a good thing for the world if everyone neglected and forgot the hideous gases those odors suggest.

JEAN. There's something worse?

CYNTHIA. In the last world war my father was gassed with mustard or HS. He said the soldiers called it HS because it was hot stuff.

ANNE. Remember it smells like horse-radish, Jean. Want a sniff?

JEAN. No, neither of horse-radish nor HS, thank you.

DAN. But Lewisite or M, has that all beaten hollow, for it has all the other properties combined. They say it smells like geranium.

TONY. It not only burns but it blisters and dissolves the skin. Say, seems to me this old world is in an awful muddle.

BILL. Our history teacher says that every age has its own war pains and problems.

DAN. You can just bet this A. R. P. business is a problem when our principal, Mr. Sanborn, requires every last one of us to take the course.

TONY. Yes, and I think we're the first school not only in Massachusetts but in the United States to have such a course. We'll learn how to do our share, anyhow.

(MOTHER enters, pauses, listening to conversation.)

CLARK. All America wants is a chance to live at peace—at home and abroad.

MOTHER. (*Advancing to c.*) Yes, Clark, you're right, but since Pearl Harbor we all know that if America wants peace she must fight for it.

JEAN. Why, Mother, I thought —

MOTHER. (*Smiling*) Yes, Jean, I know I seemed placid but, surprise, your father has just been made air warden in our sector.

JEAN. But why haven't you and Father told me you were interested in defense?

MOTHER. You've been ill and doctor's orders were not to excite you, dear.

CLARK. I hope we haven't excited her too much with our chatter, Mrs. Dunn.

ANNE. We've been telling her about defense work we're having at school.

MOTHER. That's nice. After hearing General Sweetser explain our situation, I certainly realize that America has to show those Japs, Hitler, and all other dictators what it means to be free and equal as a people and why tens and tens of thousands of our boys are ready and willing to die in order to keep this "idea" alive.

TONY. You're right! Remember Pearl Harbor!

(DAN passes defense stamp books to members of group.)

GWEN. Remember, too, that licking the defense stamps helps lick the Japs.

BILL. (*Taking bond from pocket*) Say, don't be a sap. Buy bonds and lick the Jap.

ANNE. Right. You know, they seem to think because we have easy living, we'll be afraid.

MOTHER. Our enemies are trying to destroy our faith in democracy—in our way of life.

CLARK. Democracy—yes, it means liberty, equality, fraternity.



JEAN. (CLARK *crosses to c.*) Our forefathers gave us all that, Clark.

CLARK. You've said it, Jean, but it's up to us to see that it works—"that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

CURTAIN

---

# Winning Winnie

*A Farce Comedy in Three Acts*

By CARL WEBSTER PIERCE

FIVE MEN FIVE WOMEN

INTERIOR SET

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**W**ANDA WESTON, a noted authoress, has answered an advertisement of THE JOLLY BACHELOR'S CLUB, an organization composed of lonely bachelors, who desire to correspond with eligible spinsters. Wanda starts the correspondence, hoping that these various letters will furnish her with material for her stories. She keeps the letters on a very formal basis. But when she breaks her wrist and cannot continue the correspondence, her younger sister, Winnie, begins where Wanda has left off. But Winnie changes the tenor of the letters and goes terribly romantic. This intrigues three of the "Jolly Bachelors" to such an extent that they decide to visit Winnie who already has a fiancé in the person of handsome young Robert Radcliff. Winnie is thrown into a panic and arranges with Tillie, the maid, to impersonate her and receive Texas Tripp, from Texas; Flora, the cook, to pose as Winnie, and receive Pete Parker, a rancher from Montana; and Wanda's secretary, Ethel Elkins, to assume Winnie's name when Romney Romaine, a young poet, arrives. Her great problem is to keep the three couples from meeting and to keep the knowledge of all this from her fiancé. The climax is reached when Texas, Pete and Romney fall hard for Tillie, Flora and Ethel, and procure marriage licenses with the name of "Winifred Weston" on them.

## THE CHARACTERS

WANDA WESTON, *an authoress.*

WINNIE WESTON, *her sister.*

ETHEL ELKINS, *Wanda's secretary.*

TILLIE TOMPKINS, *a maid.*

FLORA FISH, *the cook.*

ROMNEY ROMAINE, *a poet.*

PETE PARKER, *from Montana.*

TEXAS TRIPP, *from Texas.*

ROBERT RADCLIFF, *Winnie's fiancé.*

REV. MR. DARLING, *a minister.*

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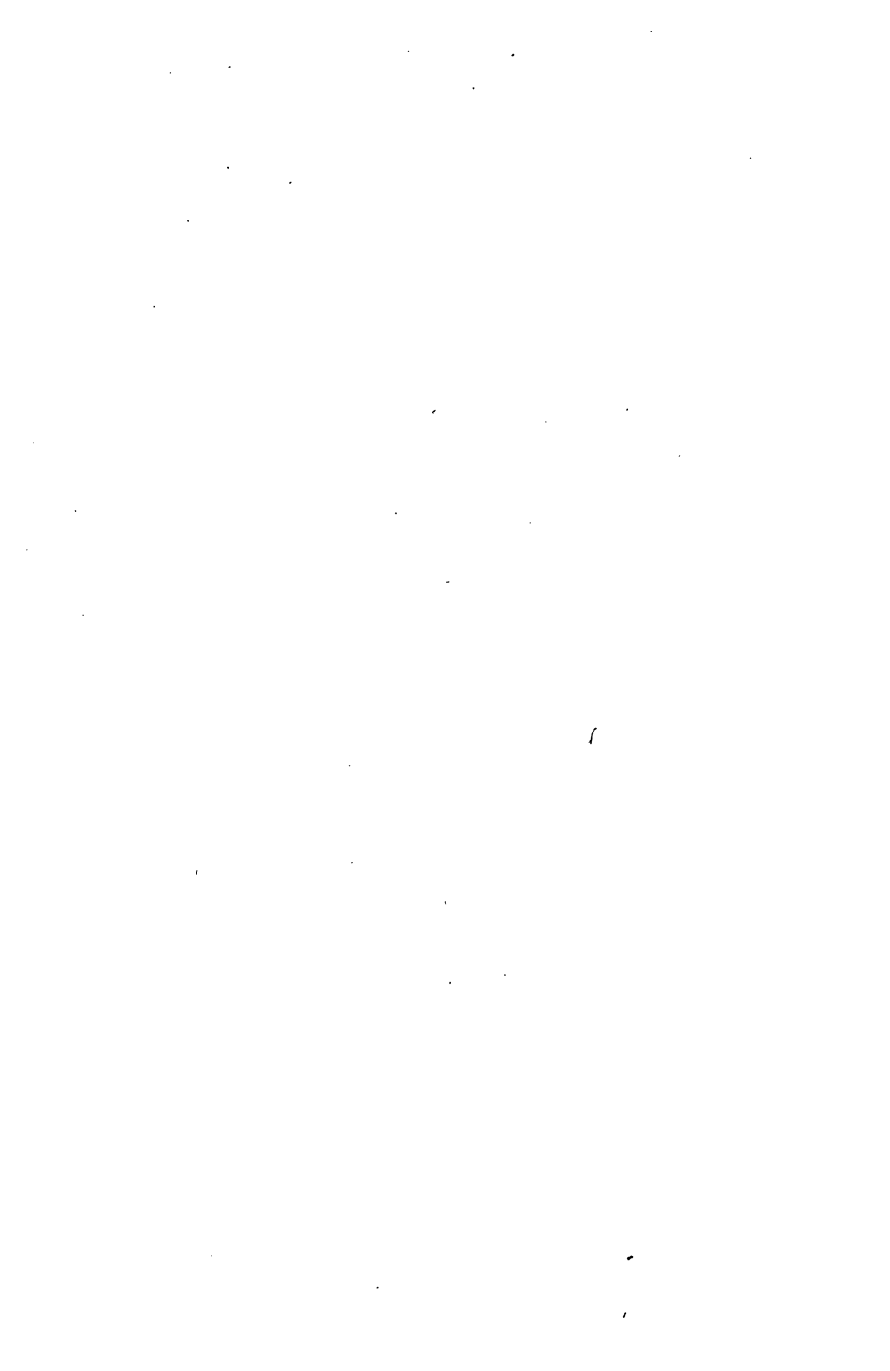
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